DC

THE DARK MANSION OF FORBIDDEN LOVE

A full-length novel of love and danger complete in this issue!

The DARK MANSION of FORBIDDEN LOVE

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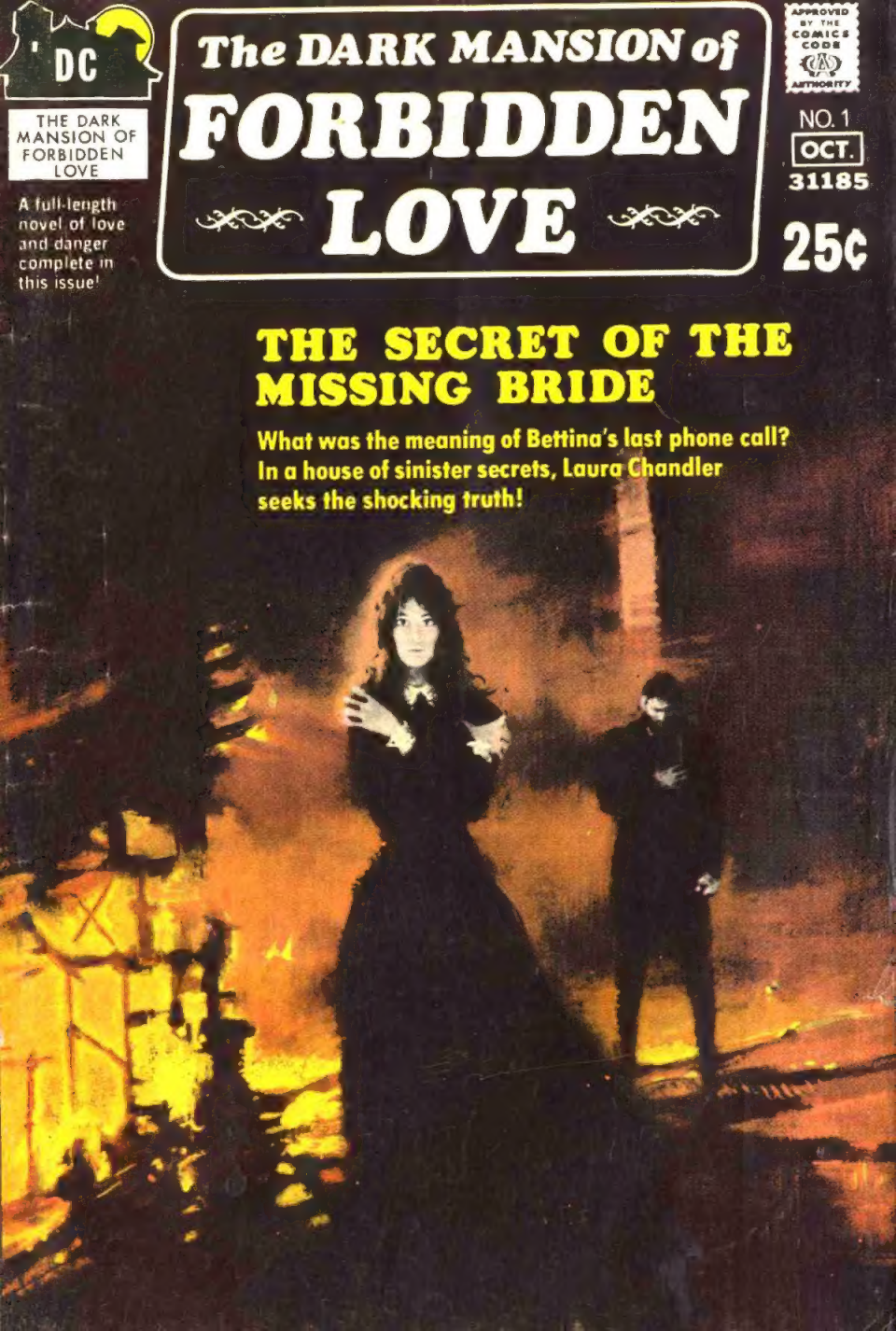
THE SECRET OF THE MISSING BRIDE

What was the meaning of Bettina's last phone call? In a house of sinister secrets, Laura Chandler seeks the shocking truth!



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The MYSTERY of the MISSING BRIDE

WHO KILLED BETTINA?
WAS IT THE CRUEL OLD WOMAN WHO RULED THE LANGFREY FAMILY?
WAS IT FRANCESCA, WHO ROAMED THE HOUSE AT NIGHT, SINGING TO HERSELF?
WAS IT THE FAMILY LAWYER, SUAVE AND SINISTER?
WAS IT HANDSOME, BROODING MICHAEL, WHO ATTRACTED AND YET REPELLED YOUNG LAURA?
THE DREADFUL ANSWER LAY HIDDEN SOMEWHERE IN THE CRUMBLING OLD MANSION.
Art by: TONY di ZUNIGA
TAFFY
JORDAN
THE UNINVITED GUEST
EMILY WEST
Edited by: DOROTHY WOOLFOLK and ETHAN MORDDEN

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CHAPTER 1: KILLER ON THE LOOSE!

JANUARY—AND THE COLDEST WINTER IN YEARS. BUT DEATH KNOWS NO SEASON... TEN SHIVERING FIGURES STOOD GRIMLY AT THE GRAVE'S EDGE, WATCHING THE COFFIN BEING BORNE TO ITS FINAL RESTING PLACE...

HIDDEN IN THE NEARBY WOODS WAS ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE FUNERAL PARTY...UNNOTICED AND *UNINVITED*. HE STOOD MOTIONLESS, SILENT AND WATCHFUL IN THE BITTER COLD OF THE WINTER NIGHT...

STILL ANOTHER STRANGER ATTENDED THE FUNERAL.... *LAURA CHANDLER*, BEST FRIEND OF THE YOUNG GIRL WHOSE BODY WAS NOW BEING LAID TO REST...

OH, BETTINA! YOU HAD *SO MUCH* TO LIVE FOR! WHY DID YOU HAVE TO *DIE*? *WHY*?

IT WAS OVER. THE PRAYERS DIED AWAY, EXTINGUISHED BY THE WIND. LAURA MOVED TOWARDS THE GRAVE, FEELING THEIR EYES ON HER... EYES WITH DARK QUESTIONS... EYES THAT RESENTED HER. EYES WATCHING FROM BEHIND HEAVY VEILS... EARLY THAT MORNING LAURA HAD LEFT THE ORPHANAGE WHERE NOW SHE LIVED... SHE FELT FAINT, WEAK...

WHO IS SHE? I HAVE NEVER SEEN HER BEFORE! THIS IS A LANGFREY FAMILY AFFAIR!

WHY IS SHE INTRUDING ON OUR PRIVATE GRIEF?

I KNOW THEY *RESENT* ME... BUT *I* LOVED BETTINA, TOO! I HAD TO COME... AND BRING MY *WREATH!*

NOW LEADEN-HEARTED, HER EYES BLINDED BY TEARS, SHE INTRODUCED HERSELF TO THE HOSTILE LANGFREYS.

MY NAME IS LAURA CHANDLER... PLEASE DON'T TREAT ME AS AN *ENEMY.* BETTINA WAS MY FRIEND— DIDN'T SHE EVER SPEAK OF ME? WHY, SHE WROTE ABOUT YOU SO OFTEN THAT I FEEL I KNOW YOU... *ALL* OF YOU...

I'M VERY SORRY TO HAVE INTRUDED. I DIDN'T THINK FOR A MOMENT THAT ANYONE WOULD *MIND* IF I CAME...

THE DIZZINESS... SHE FELT THE DIZZINESS AGAIN, BUT EMILY LANGFREY'S VOICE WAS RASPING INTO HER BRAIN...

TELL ME, MISS CHANDLER—SINCE YOU *CLAIM* TO BE BETTINA'S FRIEND, WHY DID SHE *NEVER* VISIT YOU? AND *WHEN DID YOU SEE HER LAST?*

WHY, BETTINA *DID* VISIT ME... AND WE WROTE EACH OTHER A GREAT DEAL! AND THEN... RECENTLY... SHE PHONED ME... AND...

I CAN'T GO ON... I FEEL SO.. STRANGE...

THE DIZZINESS ENGULFED HER. SHE STUMBLED AGAIN, HER HEAD SWAM, HER KNEES BUCKLED, AS THE FACES WHIRLED ABOUT HER...

SHE'S FAINTED! CATCH HER...

LAURA'S LIMP BODY WAS LIFTED INTO THE LIMOUSINE. MEANWHILE IN THE WOODS BEHIND, THE MENACING FIGURE WATCHED THE CARS DRIVE OFF. HE CREPT AWAY IN THE DARKNESS... AWAY TO FIND WARMTH AND SHELTER... AND *REVENGE* IN LANGFREY HOUSE...

INSIDE THE FUNERAL CAR, AS LAURA STRUGGLED VAINLY TO REGAIN CONSCIOUSNESS...

REALLY, MICHAEL! I THINK YOU MIGHT HAVE *MENTIONED* THIS GIRL'S EXISTENCE TO US! SURELY YOU KNEW ABOUT BETTINA'S *BEST FRIEND!*

I KNEW OF HER, AUNT EMILY, BUT WE HADN'T MET! BETTINA PLANNED FOR US TO GO AND SEE LAURA... DEAR GOD, BETTINA HAD SO MANY PLANS!

NOW THE HOUSE WILL NEVER BE THE SAME...

NONSENSE, MICHAEL! IT'S BEEN THE SAME FOR 100 YEARS! BETTINA'S DEATH WILL IN *NO WAY* CHANGE IT. YOU *MUST* RESTRAIN THESE OUTBURSTS OF YOURS!

AUNT EMILY, KINDLY ALLOW ME TO GRIEVE FOR MY DEAD. BETTINA WAS ALL I HAD... I *LOVED* HER!

NOW, MICHAEL, DON'T UPSET YOURSELF! THIS IS *FOOLISH* TALK...

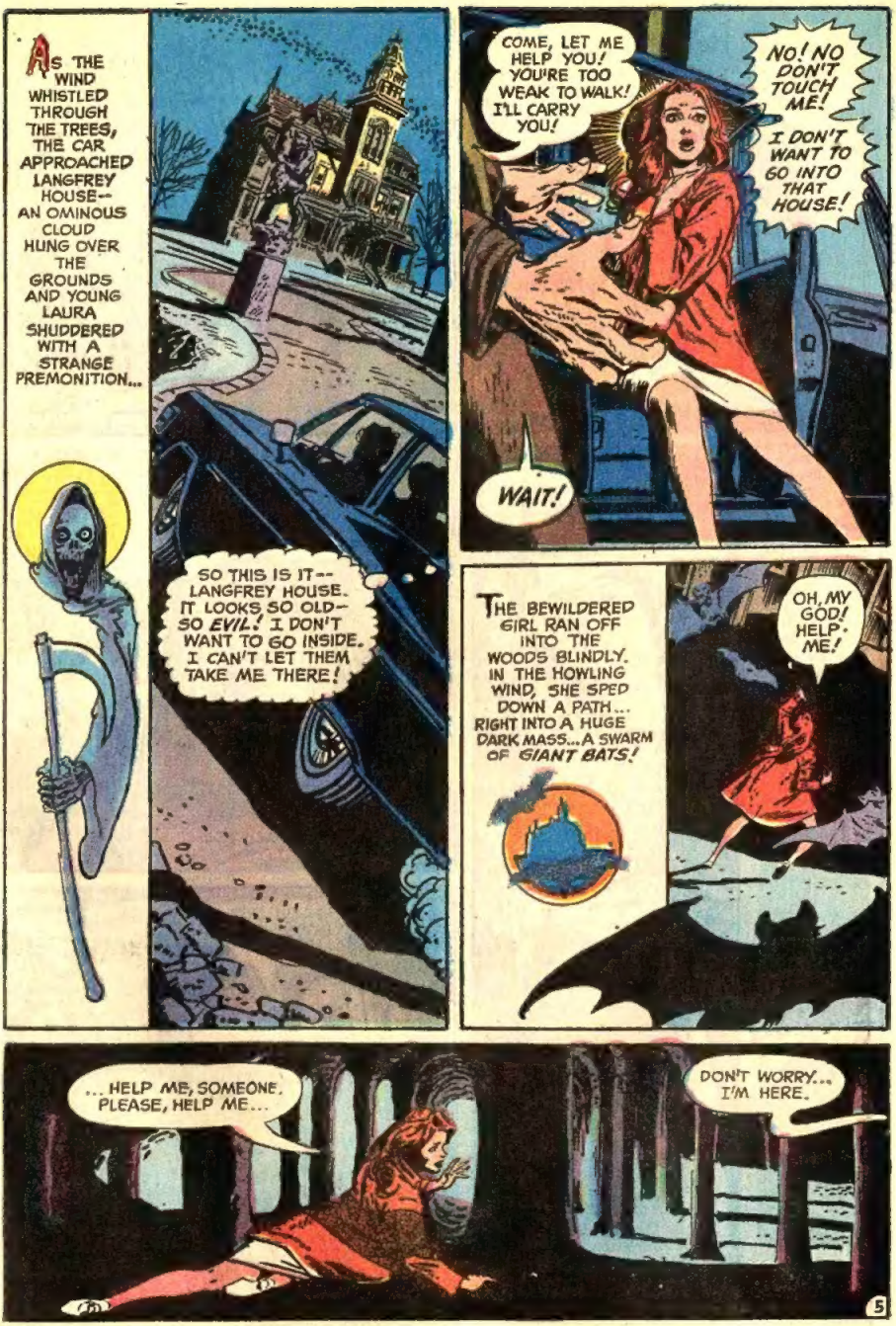
STOP TREATING ME LIKE A CHILD, AUNT EMILY! YOU *NEVER* WANTED ME TO MARRY BETTINA! SHE BROUGHT YOUTH AND LIFE TO US-- NOW IT'S ALL OVER!

HUSH! SHE'S WAKING UP!

WH-WHERE AM I? WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?

HUSH, DEAR! DON'T FRET. WE'RE TAKING YOU SOMEPLACE... WARM AND FRIENDLY. JUST LEAVE IT TO US.

THERE'S SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT HER... I-I DON'T TRUST HER.


As the wind whistled through the trees, the car approached Langfrey House-- an ominous cloud hung over the grounds and young Laura shuddered with a strange premonition...
So this is it-- Langfrey House. It looks so old-- so EVIL! I don't want to go inside. I can't let them take me there!
Come, let me help you! You're too weak to walk! I'll carry you!
No! No don't touch me! I don't want to go into that house!
WAIT!
The bewildered girl ran off into the woods blindly. In the howling wind, she sped down a path... right into a huge dark mass... a swarm of GIANT BATS!
Oh, my God! Help me!
...help me, someone, please, help me...
Don't worry... I'm here.
5

I WILL HELP YOU, LAURA! YOU MUSTN'T BE AFRAID.
I-I DON'T KNOW YOU... IF ONLY... I COULD TRUST YOU...
YOU HAVE NO CHOICE!

YOU'RE SO YOUNG... SO SOFT... SO HELPLESS.
I'M AFRAID OF HIM. AND YET...

SUDDENLY, THE STRANGER CRUSHED HER TO HIM. AS HIS LIPS SEARED HERS, A STRANGE NEW FEELING SWEPT OVER HER. A FEELING SHE HAD NEVER KNOWN...

POOR LITTLE THING! LIKE AN INJURED BIRD FALLEN FROM HER NEST. I'LL TAKE YOU BACK NOW!
BUT WHY DID YOU COME HERE? WHAT DESTINY PLUCKED YOU FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD AND THRUST YOU — HERE?

SO YOU GOT HER, GOOD! BRING HER IN!
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.
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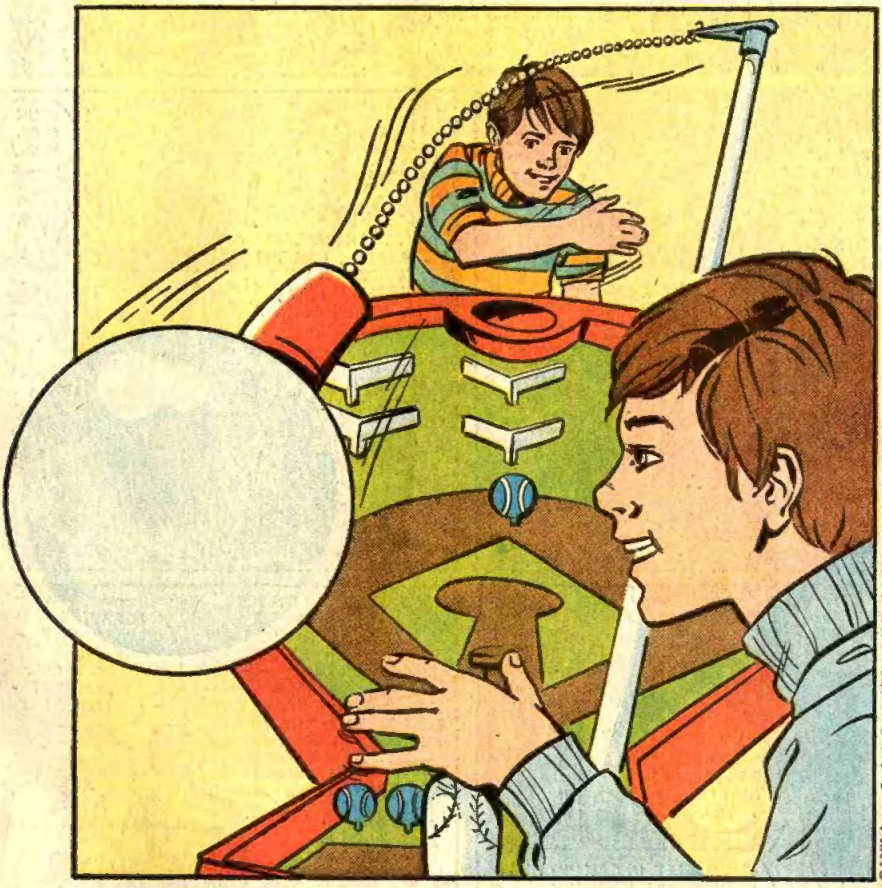
What would you call a game with pitchers, hitters, runners, outs, base hits, double plays, home runs and a . . . chain?



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AURORA

I'LL TAKE CARE OF HER! YOU'RE MAKING ME NERVOUS, MICHAEL!
I WANT TO BE SURE SHE'S ALL RIGHT!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT HER! GET UPSTAIRS AND FIND SOMETHING TO OCCUPY YOURSELF!
I WISH HE WOULDN'T GO! H-HE'S STRANGE— BUT HE SEEMS NICER THAN THE OTHERS!
YOUR MILK, MUM.
CLICK!
...CONTINUE TO SEARCH FOR THE MADMAN WHO ESCAPED FROM DURNVILLE ASYLUM EARLY THIS AFTERNOON... THIS MAN IS A KILLER!
TURN THAT THING OFF, LAWRENCE!
I WANTED TO HEAR IF THEY CAUGHT THAT LUNATIC YET.
DR. MALLET IS CALLING THIS EVENING. I'LL HAVE HIM LOOK AT MISS CHANDLER THEN. MEANWHILE TAFFY CAN SEE TO HER!
IT'S VERY KIND OF YOU, MRS. LANGFREY, BUT I REALLY CAN'T STAY! I HAVE TO GET BACK TO THE ORPHANAGE.
I DIDN'T TELL ANYONE THERE THAT I WAS GOING TO THE FUNERAL. THEY'LL BE WORRIED ABOUT ME.
FORSYTHE ORPHANAGE? WHY, THE MATRON IS ONE OF MY OLDEST CLIENTS!
HOW LUCKY!... AS HER LAWYER, LAWRENCE, YOU SHOULD CALL THE MATRON AND TELL HER MISS CHANDLER IS WITH US AND PERFECTLY SAFE!
DRINK YOUR MILK, DEAR! IT WILL MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER!
DO YOU THINK THAT'S ADVISABLE, EMILY?
7

A WARNING BELL SOUNDED IN LAURA'S MIND- DANGER WAS FACING HER. BUT HER SENSES WERE NUMB FROM COLD AND FRIGHT. UNTHINKINGLY, SHE DRAINED THE CUP...

THAT'S A GOOD GIRL. BOTTOMS UP!

JUST HOPE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING, EMILY!

AND SUDDENLY...

WHY, *LOOK* AT HER! THE GIRL IS ABSURDLY WEAK! SHE CAN HARDLY HOLD THAT EMPTY CUP-- SHE'LL *HAVE* TO STAY!

I... FEEL... SO STRANGE...

WHAT DID THEY PUT IN THAT DRINK? OHHH...

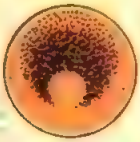
AT LAST! I WAS AFRAID SHE DIDN'T GET THE RIGHT CUP.

YOU MEAN THE *DRUGGED* ONE.

REALLY, EMILY, I DON'T APPROVE OF THIS AT ALL! I WARN YOU...

HUSH, YOU FOOL!

A HALF HOUR LATER, LAURA AWOKE IN AN UPSTAIRS ROOM. THE DARKNESS SEEMED TO BE PRESSING IN...



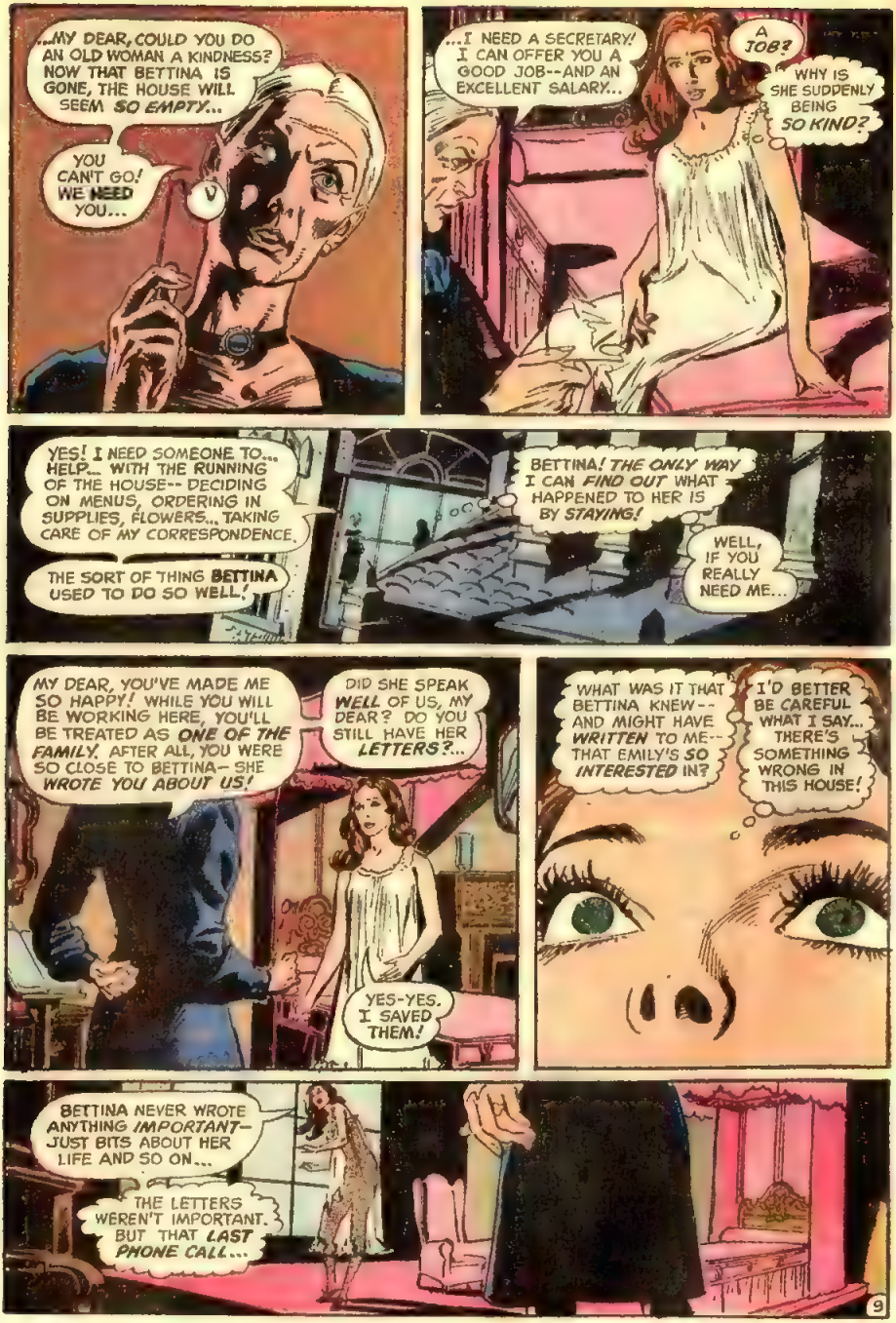
WHERE AM I? ...WHAT TIME IS IT?

GIVE ME MY CLOTHES! I CAN'T STAY HERE...

MUST YOU LEAVE IN SUCH A HURRY, MY DEAR? MR. WEST SPOKE TO THE MATRON AT THE ORPHANAGE.

THEY WON'T BE EXPECTING YOU... FOR SOME TIME...

THIS IS DIFFICULT FOR ME TO SAY— BUT I MUST! WE WERE *VERY* FOND OF *POOR, DEAR BETTINA!* BECAUSE YOU WERE HER FRIEND, I-I FEEL VERY CLOSE TO YOU, LAURA. LET ME ASK A FAVOR OF YOU...


...MY DEAR, COULD YOU DO AN OLD WOMAN A KINDNESS? NOW THAT BETTINA IS GONE, THE HOUSE WILL SEEM SO EMPTY...
YOU CAN'T GO! WE NEED YOU...
...I NEED A SECRETARY! I CAN OFFER YOU A GOOD JOB--AND AN EXCELLENT SALARY...
A JOB?
WHY IS SHE SUDDENLY BEING SO KIND?
YES! I NEED SOMEONE TO... HELP... WITH THE RUNNING OF THE HOUSE-- DECIDING ON MENUS, ORDERING IN SUPPLIES, FLOWERS... TAKING CARE OF MY CORRESPONDENCE.
THE SORT OF THING BETTINA USED TO DO SO WELL!
BETTINA! THE ONLY WAY I CAN FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO HER IS BY STAYING!
WELL, IF YOU REALLY NEED ME...
MY DEAR, YOU'VE MADE ME SO HAPPY! WHILE YOU WILL BE WORKING HERE, YOU'LL BE TREATED AS ONE OF THE FAMILY. AFTER ALL, YOU WERE SO CLOSE TO BETTINA-- SHE WROTE YOU ABOUT US!
DID SHE SPEAK WELL OF US, MY DEAR? DO YOU STILL HAVE HER LETTERS?...
YES-YES. I SAVED THEM!
WHAT WAS IT THAT BETTINA KNEW-- AND MIGHT HAVE WRITTEN TO ME-- THAT EMILY'S SO INTERESTED IN?
I'D BETTER BE CAREFUL WHAT I SAY... THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG IN THIS HOUSE!
BETTINA NEVER WROTE ANYTHING IMPORTANT-- JUST BITS ABOUT HER LIFE AND SO ON...
THE LETTERS WEREN'T IMPORTANT. BUT THAT LAST PHONE CALL...

IN THAT INSTANT, LAURA'S MIND SPED BACK TO THAT LAST URGENT PHONE CALL...
BETTINA, SPEAK UP! I CAN HARDLY HEAR YOU! IS SOMETHING--
I CAN'T TALK LOUD, LAURA! THEY MIGHT HEAR ME! BUT PLEASE COME HERE-- SO I CAN SPEAK TO YOU! THERE'S SOMETHING I MUST TELL YOU... SOMETHING DREADFUL...
I-I JUST DISCOVERED THAT THE LANGFREYS ARE COVERING UP A ...A CRIME! CAN YOU COME, LAURA? PLEASE! I BEG YOU!
WHEN DO YOU WANT ME, BETTINA?
HELLO? HELLO? BETTINA?
WE'VE BEEN CUT OFF!
AND AS EMILY WAITED FOR HER ANSWER, LAURA NODDED...
SO, MY DEAR, WE'VE REACHED AN UNDERSTANDING... YOU'LL STAY ON AS MY SECRETARY. I'M SURE YOU'LL WANT TO REST AFTER YOUR LONG AFTERNOON AT THE CEMETERY. GOOD NIGHT... PLEASANT DREAMS, MY DEAR...
GOOD NIGHT, MRS. LANGFREY!
ALONE, IN THE MASSIVE BED, LAURA BROODED...
THAT PHONE CALL WAS THE LAST TIME I HEARD YOUR VOICE! YOU DIED THAT NIGHT-- THAT WAS NO ACCIDENT, I'M SURE, SOMEWHERE IN THIS HOUSE LIES THE ANSWER TO YOUR DEATH-- AND I'LL FIND IT, MY DEAR FRIEND. I PROMISE YOU!
AS THE FRAIL GIRL SLIPPED BETWEEN THE BEDCLOTHES, SHE WAS TOTALLY UNAWARE OF THE SINISTER FIGURE LURKING ON THE BALCONY OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY...
WHILE LAURA FELL ASLEEP, A BLACK-GLOVED HAND REACHED FOR THE LIBRARY DOOR AND SOFTLY, SOFTLY BEGAN TO OPEN IT...
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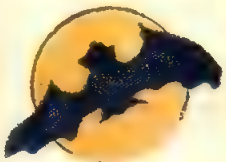
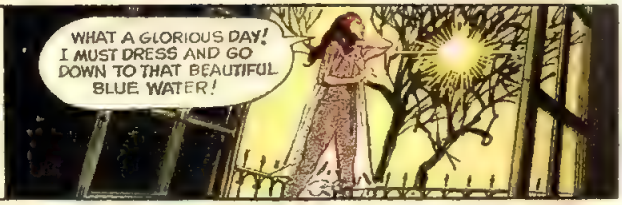
CHAPTER 2 DEATH AT LANGFREY LEAP...

LAURA WAS FRIGHTENED OF EMILY LANGFREY. SHE SENSED THE OLD WOMAN'S RUTHLESSNESS, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, SHE WAS DETERMINED TO UNRAVEL THE MYSTERY OF BETTINA'S DEATH. PERHAPS BY STAYING ON AS EMILY LANGFREY'S SECRETARY, SHE COULD NOT ONLY SOLVE THE MYSTERY BUT SHE MIGHT ALSO PLUMB THE DEPTHS OF THE SECRET OF *LANGFREY HOUSE*...



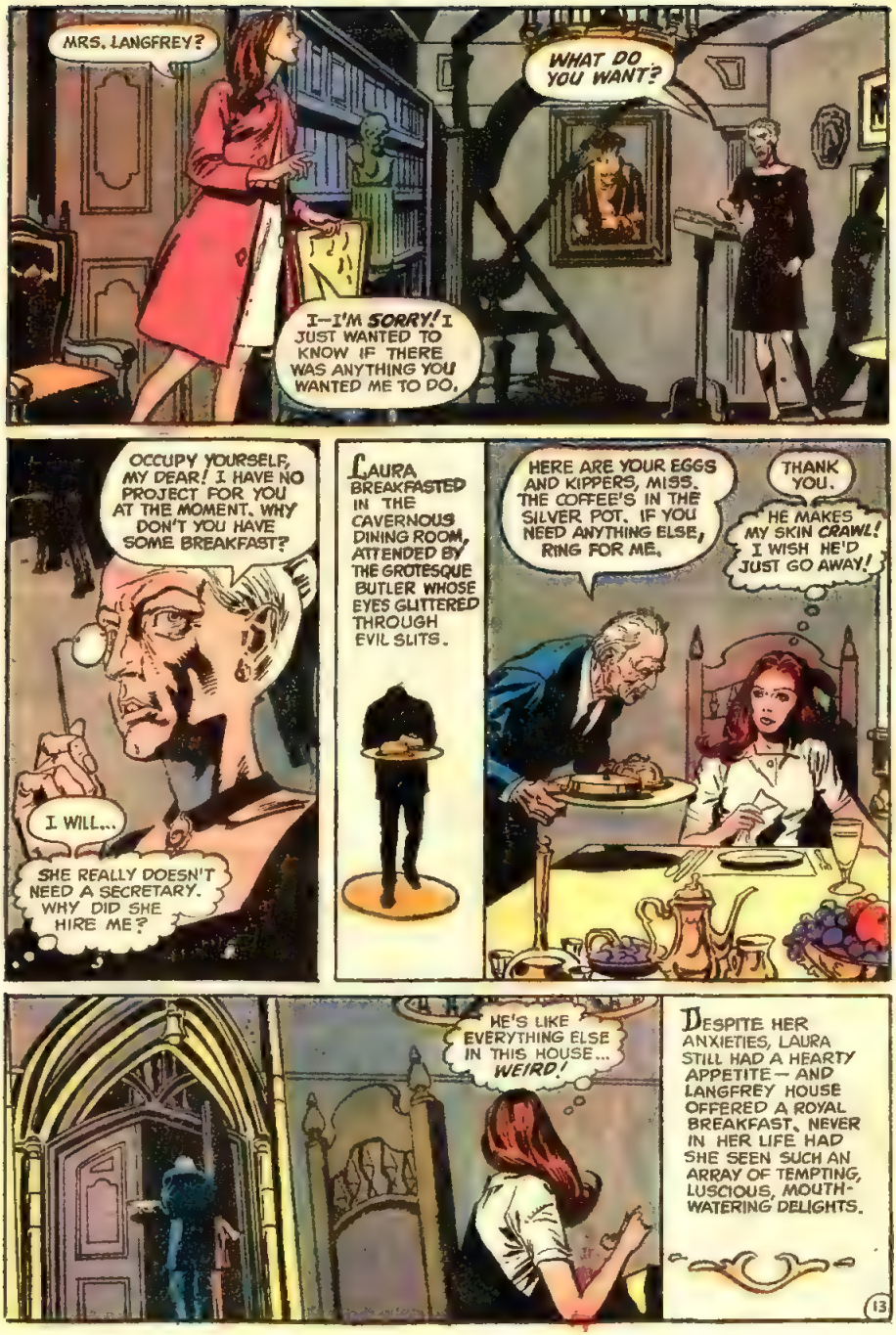
AS THE WIND HOWLED ITS WAY THROUGH THE NIGHT, THE YOUNG GIRL SLEPT THE SLEEP OF ANGELS. MORNING DAWNED, AND THE SUNLIGHT WOKE HER, TEMPTING HER WITH ITS REASSURING WARMTH...



BUT AS SHE STROLLED ALONG...

YOU LITTLE FOOL! DON'T YOU KNOW BETTER THAN TO WANDER AROUND THIS PLACE *ALONE?*
HE LOOKS SO *FIERCE!* HIS HANDS ARE HURTING ME... BUT SOMEHOW I- I DON'T MIND...

SUDDENLY, HIS CRUSHING HANDS TURNED GENTLE AGAINST HER FLESH. SHE LOST ALL DESIRE TO RESIST, ALL AWARENESS OF EVERYTHING AROUND HER, EVERYTHING EXCEPT THE CLOSENESS OF THIS MAN...
YOU'RE SO... BEAUTIFUL... SO HELPLESS... I CAN'T HELP MYSELF...!
PLEASE! YOU MUSTN'T! YOU AND BETTINA... MY BEST FRIEND... YOU WERE MARRIED!
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! I LOVED BETTINA! BUT SHE'S GONE NOW, AND YOU... COME TO ME, LAURA...
TORN BETWEEN DESIRE AND TERROR, LAURA PANICKED AND FLED MADLY TO THE HOUSE...
HE WAS THE ONLY ONE I COULD TRUST! WHOM CAN I TURN TO NOW?
12


MRS. LANGFREY?
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
I—I'M SORRY! I JUST WANTED TO KNOW IF THERE WAS ANYTHING YOU WANTED ME TO DO.
OCCUPY YOURSELF, MY DEAR! I HAVE NO PROJECT FOR YOU AT THE MOMENT. WHY DON'T YOU HAVE SOME BREAKFAST?
I WILL...
SHE REALLY DOESN'T NEED A SECRETARY. WHY DID SHE HIRE ME?
LAURA BREAKFASTED IN THE CAVERNOUS DINING ROOM, ATTENDED BY THE GROTESQUE BUTLER WHOSE EYES GLITTERED THROUGH EVIL SLITS.
HERE ARE YOUR EGGS AND KIPPERS, MISS. THE COFFEE'S IN THE SILVER POT. IF YOU NEED ANYTHING ELSE, RING FOR ME.
THANK YOU.
HE MAKES MY SKIN CRAWL! I WISH HE'D JUST GO AWAY!
HE'S LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE IN THIS HOUSE... WEIRD!
DESPITE HER ANXIETIES, LAURA STILL HAD A HEARTY APPETITE — AND LANGFREY HOUSE OFFERED A ROYAL BREAKFAST. NEVER IN HER LIFE HAD SHE SEEN SUCH AN ARRAY OF TEMPTING, LUSCIOUS, MOUTH-WATERING DELIGHTS.

HER HEALTHY YOUNG APPETITE ASSERTED ITSELF AS SHE SAVORED EVERY TIDBIT ON THE TABLE...
I'VE NEVER TASTED FOOD THIS GOOD!
WHAT I'VE GOT TO DO IS SEARCH THIS HOUSE FROM TOP TO BOTTOM! IT'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN DISCOVER WHAT HAPPENED TO BETTINA...
SUDDENLY!
SCRI REEK
WHAT'S THAT?
OH, MY GOD!
GOOD LORD! WHAT A DREADFUL ACCIDENT!
CRASH
I--COULD HAVE BEEN KILLED!
HOW FORTUNATE THAT YOU WEREN'T! DEAR--GO UPSTAIRS AND REST...
THE "ACCIDENT" ONLY STRENGTHENED LAURA'S DESIRE TO SOLVE THE MYSTERY OF BETTINA'S DEATH. LATER THAT DAY SHE CLIMBED A STAIRWAY IN THE REAR OF THE HOUSE...
ONE DOOR LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER! I MIGHT AS WELL TRY THIS ONE FIRST...
OHH!
14

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHAT DO YOU WANT?
I-I'M SORRY. NOTHING REALLY. I-I JUST CAME UP HERE...
DIDN'T I TELL YOU NOT TO GO WANDERING AROUND? LANGFREY HOUSE ISN'T A PLACE WHERE STRANGERS CAN ROAM ABOUT!
HIS CRUEL, BITING TONE CUT LAURA TO THE QUICK. YET, DESPITE HERSELF, SHE WAS DRAWN TO HIM... SHE COULD NOT BRING HERSELF TO LEAVE...
WHAT'S WRONG? WHAT'S THE MATTER, GIRL?
NOTHING... I-I'D BETTER LEAVE...
WHY, YOU'RE CRYING!
I KNOW! I'VE TOLD YOU TO BE CAREFUL IN THIS HOUSE!
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT! THERE WAS AN ACCIDENT...
OH, MICHAEL, I'M SO CONFUSED!
I'VE BEEN TOO HARD ON YOU... IS THAT IT, LAURA?
I FEEL SO STRANGE... HIS EYES... I COULD FAINT...

NO! GO NOW!
I DON'T WANT YOU IN MY STUDIO!
MICHAEL!
HOW CAN HE ACT THIS WAY?
NO! I STAYED ON TO FIND OUT ABOUT BETTINA. I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS— AND I WANT ANSWERS TO THEM!
OH, I'M SORRY!
ALL RIGHT! BUT THERE ISN'T MUCH TO TELL! EMILY HAS TAKEN CARE OF THINGS AROUND HERE, AS SHE HAS DONE SINCE MY PARENTS DIED...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SORRY. THE ACCIDENT HAPPENED TEN YEARS AGO...
"I'LL NEVER FORGET THAT NIGHT. IT WAS CHRISTMAS EVE, AND MY PARENTS WERE BUSY DECORATING THE TREE..!
KRRIING
ANSWER THE PHONE, MICHAEL.
"IT WAS SUCH A MYSTERIOUS PHONE CALL. EMILY TOOK IT! I'VE OFTEN WONDERED WHO IT WAS..."
YES? AH... THAT'S GOOD. YES, YES. I'LL DO THAT. DON'T WORRY. I'LL TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING. GOOD BYE.
"IT WASN'T LIKE MOST CHRISTMAS EVES THAT I REMEMBER. EVERYONE SEEMED JITTERY, EVEN MOTHER."
WE WON'T BE HERE FOR DINNER, EMILY. ALLAN AND I ARE GOING INTO TOWN FOR A WHILE.
ON CHRISTMAS EVE, ALICE? AND IN SUCH A STORM!
WE HAVE IMPORTANT BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO.

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Print Name.....Age.....

Address.....Apt. No.....

City & State.....Zip.....

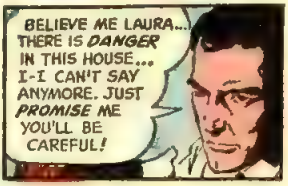
01M

AT LEAST YOU'LL HAVE SOME EGGNOG WITH US BEFORE YOU LEAVE.
I SUPPOSE WE OUGHT TO, ALLAN. JUST ONE CUP...
"IT WAS A LONELY DINNER – JUST UNCLE JOHN, EMILY AND I. IF ONLY WE HAD KNOWN THAT AT THAT MOMENT..."
JOHN! DO LET ME HAVE SOME MORE OF THE PLUM PUDDING. I FEEL IN SUCH GOOD SPIRITS TONIGHT...
THAT'S ODD. WHAT COULD POSSIBLY TITILLATE YOUR TWISTED MIND, EMILY?
"...PERHAPS EVEN AT THAT VERY INSTANT, MY PARENTS' CAR WAS BLUNDERING ONTO THE OLD WAGON ROAD THAT ENDED AT THE CLIFF'S EDGE... LANGREY LEAP!"
THE POLICE SAID THE BRAKES MIGHT HAVE FAILED. EVEN SO THERE WAS NO REASON FOR THEM TO HAVE TAKEN THE WRONG ROAD – EVEN IN A STORM!! THEY QUESTIONED EVERYONE – EVEN SEBASTIAN!
SEBASTIAN?
SEBASTIAN IS EMILY'S HUSBAND... MY FATHER'S YOUNGER BROTHER. HE'S CONFINED TO A WHEEL-CHAIR – UPSTAIRS!
I SHOULD WARN YOU... STAY AWAY FROM THE THIRD FLOOR! THAT'S CONSIDERED HIS TERRITORY!
OH, MICHAEL! HOW AWFUL IT MUST HAVE BEEN FOR YOU, A LITTLE BOY, LIVING HERE ALL ALONE, AFTER THAT.

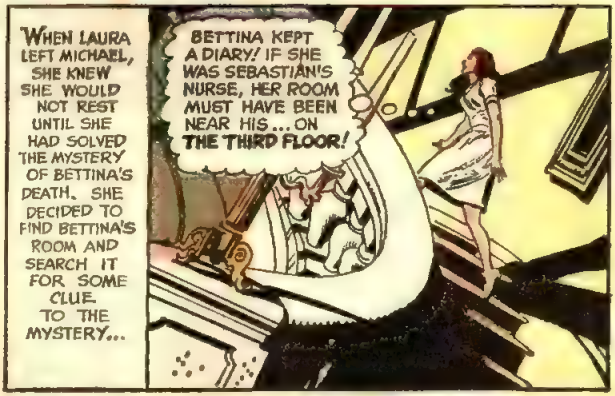
IT WAS GRIM, ALL RIGHT... UNTIL SHE CAME HERE TO NURSE HIM WHEN HE GOT PNEUMONIA. WE FELL IN LOVE ...AND--YOU KNOW THE REST.
MICHAEL, I MUST KNOW... HOW DID BETTINA GET ON WITH EMILY?

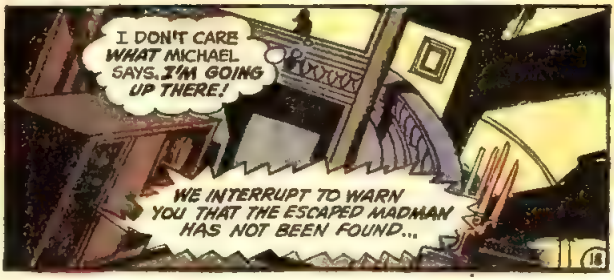
OH, THEY ARGUED A LOT! BETTINA WAS SO ALIVE... IT WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN. BUT SHE BROUGHT WARMTH AND LIGHT INTO THIS OLD HOUSE. MADE US MORE OUTGOING...
YES...SHE DID THAT TO PEOPLE! SHE WAS THE ONLY REAL FRIEND I HAD IN THE ORPHANAGE. I WAS SO LONELY AFTER SHE LEFT...

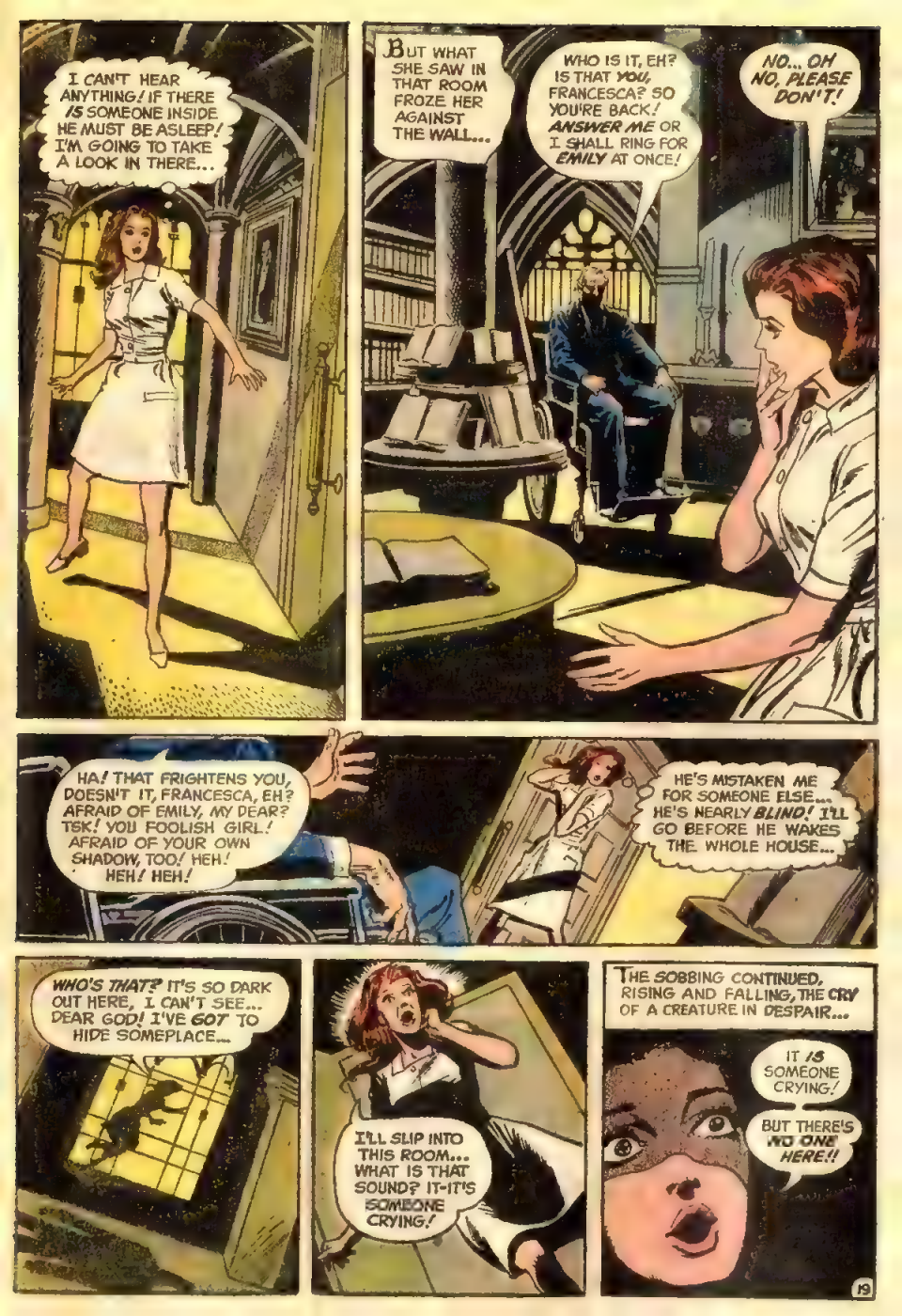
WE BOTH KNOW ABOUT LONELINESS, LAURA! IT'S A GREAT COMFORT TO ME TO KNOW YOU'RE HERE!
IF...IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOU, MICHAEL, I DON'T BELIEVE I COULD STAY!


BELIEVE ME LAURA... THERE IS DANGER IN THIS HOUSE... I-I CAN'T SAY ANYMORE. JUST PROMISE ME YOU'LL BE CAREFUL!

HE TOOK HER IN HIS ARMS AGAIN, THIS TIME HOLDING HER AS IF TRYING TO BRING BACK HIS LOST HAPPINESS...


WHEN LAURA LEFT MICHAEL, SHE KNEW SHE WOULD NOT REST UNTIL SHE HAD SOLVED THE MYSTERY OF BETTINA'S DEATH. SHE DECIDED TO FIND BETTINA'S ROOM AND SEARCH IT FOR SOME CLUE. TO THE MYSTERY...
BETTINA KEPT A DIARY! IF SHE WAS SEBASTIAN'S NURSE, HER ROOM MUST HAVE BEEN NEAR HIS... ON THE THIRD FLOOR!


I DON'T CARE WHAT MICHAEL SAYS. I'M GOING UP THERE!
WE INTERRUPT TO WARN YOU THAT THE ESCAPED MADMAN HAS NOT BEEN FOUND...


I CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING! IF THERE IS SOMEONE INSIDE HE MUST BE ASLEEP! I'M GOING TO TAKE A LOOK IN THERE...
BUT WHAT SHE SAW IN THAT ROOM FROZE HER AGAINST THE WALL...
WHO IS IT, EH? IS THAT YOU, FRANCESCA? SO YOU'RE BACK! ANSWER ME OR I SHALL RING FOR EMILY AT ONCE!
NO... OH NO, PLEASE DON'T!
HA! THAT FRIGHTENS YOU, DOESN'T IT, FRANCESCA, EH? AFRAID OF EMILY, MY DEAR? TSK! YOU FOOLISH GIRL! AFRAID OF YOUR OWN SHADOW, TOO! HEH! HEH! HEH!
HE'S MISTAKEN ME FOR SOMEONE ELSE... HE'S NEARLY BLIND! I'LL GO BEFORE HE WAKES THE WHOLE HOUSE...
WHO'S THAT? IT'S SO DARK OUT HERE, I CAN'T SEE... DEAR GOD! I'VE GOT TO HIDE SOMEPLACE...
I'LL SLIP INTO THIS ROOM... WHAT IS THAT SOUND? IT-IT'S SOMEONE CRYING!
THE SOBBING CONTINUED, RISING AND FALLING, THE CRY OF A CREATURE IN DESPAIR...
IT IS SOMEONE CRYING!
BUT THERE'S NO ONE HERE!!

CHAPTER 3 THE LOCKED ROOM

WHO IS THE WHITE-HAIRED GIRL?

WHO IS THE OLD MAN IN THE WHEELCHAIR?

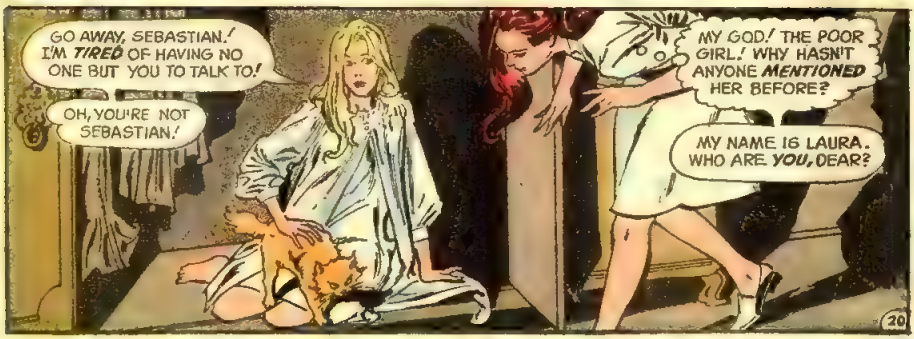
WHAT VENGEANCE DOES THE INTRUDER SEEK?

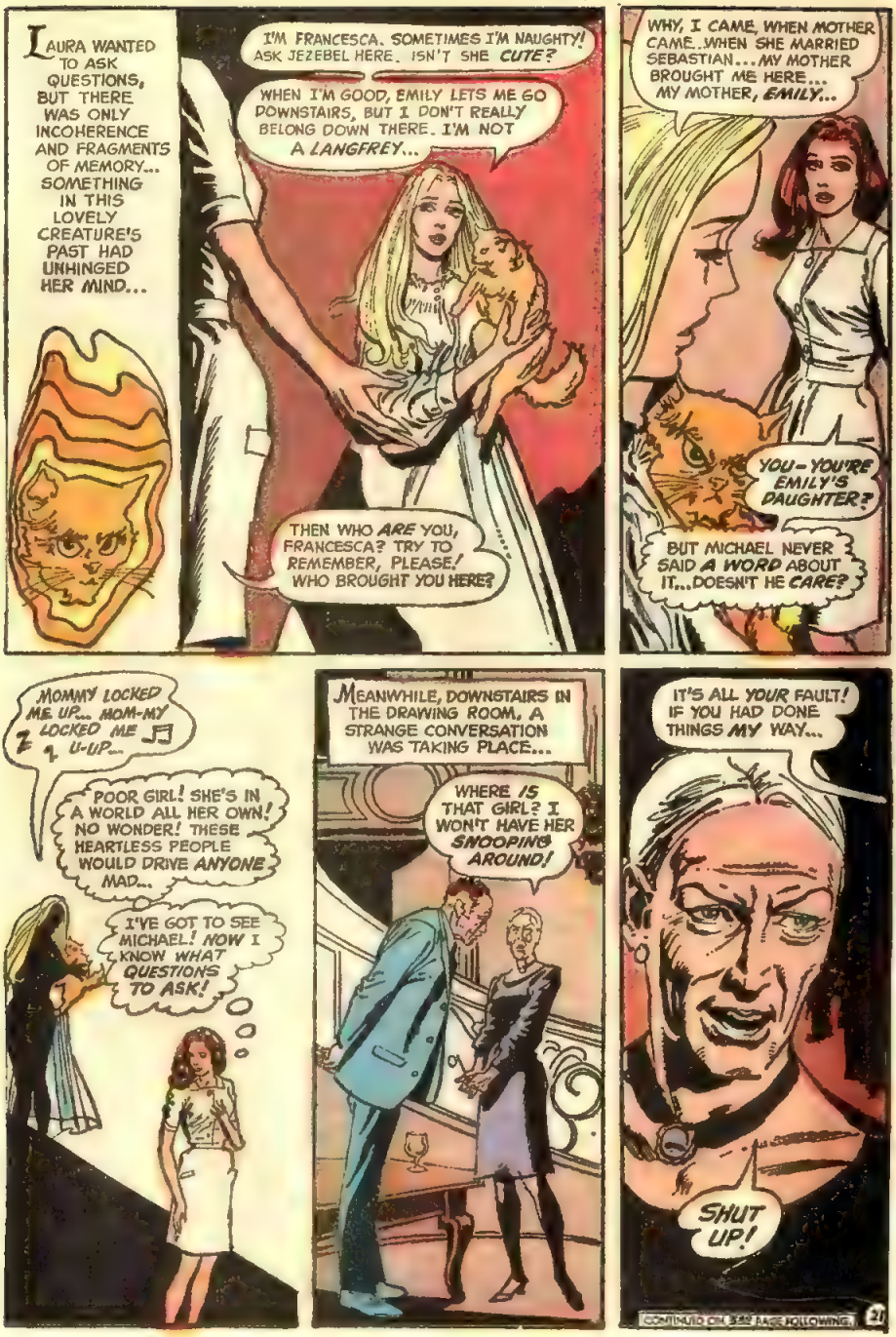
JORDAN AND TAFFY: INNOCENT OR—DANGEROUS?

EMILY AND LAWYER WEST: WHAT ARE THEY HIDING?

MICHAEL AND LAURA: WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR THEM?

AS LAURA STOOD FEARFULLY IN THE HALL, AN INSTINCT WARNED HER NOT TO ENTER. BUT CURIOSITY DREW HER ONWARD, THROUGH A DARK DOORWAY...


GO AWAY, SEBASTIAN! I'M TIRED OF HAVING NO ONE BUT YOU TO TALK TO!
OH, YOU'RE NOT SEBASTIAN!
MY GOD! THE POOR GIRL! WHY HASN'T ANYONE MENTIONED HER BEFORE?
MY NAME IS LAURA. WHO ARE YOU, DEAR?


LAURA WANTED TO ASK QUESTIONS, BUT THERE WAS ONLY INCOHERENCE AND FRAGMENTS OF MEMORY... SOMETHING IN THIS LOVELY CREATURE'S PAST HAD UNHINGED HER MIND...
I'M FRANCESCA. SOMETIMES I'M NAUGHTY! ASK JEZEBEL HERE. ISN'T SHE CUTE?
WHEN I'M GOOD, EMILY LETS ME GO DOWNSTAIRS, BUT I DON'T REALLY BELONG DOWN THERE. I'M NOT A LANGFREY...
THEN WHO ARE YOU, FRANCESCA? TRY TO REMEMBER, PLEASE! WHO BROUGHT YOU HERE?
WHY, I CAME, WHEN MOTHER CAME..WHEN SHE MARRIED SEBASTIAN...MY MOTHER BROUGHT ME HERE... MY MOTHER, EMILY...
YOU - YOU'RE EMILY'S DAUGHTER?
BUT MICHAEL NEVER SAID A WORD ABOUT IT...DOESN'T HE CARE?
MOMMY LOCKED ME UP... MOM-MY LOCKED ME U-UP...
POOR GIRL! SHE'S IN A WORLD ALL HER OWN! NO WONDER! THESE HEARTLESS PEOPLE WOULD DRIVE ANYONE MAD...
I'VE GOT TO SEE MICHAEL! NOW I KNOW WHAT QUESTIONS TO ASK!
MEANWHILE, DOWNSTAIRS IN THE DRAWING ROOM, A STRANGE CONVERSATION WAS TAKING PLACE...
WHERE IS THAT GIRL? I WON'T HAVE HER SNOOPING AROUND!
IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT! IF YOU HAD DONE THINGS MY WAY...
SHUT UP!
CONTINUED ON PAGE FOLLOWING
21

NOW—YOURS FROM COLUMBIA— AT TRULY GREAT SAVINGS...

Any 8 tapes or records FOR ONLY $3.98

If you join now and agree to buy as few as seven selections during the coming year

Take your pick

8-TRACK CARTRIDGES

OR

TAPE CASSETTES

OR

7 REEL-TO-REEL TAPES

OR

12" LP RECORDS

201780

201293

200204

201806

199158

200105

201772

199992

196972

198408

196444

199943

196741

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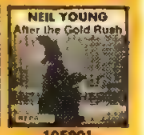
188367

194233

191809



195891

197954

190546 *

190459

191825

194563 *

191205

197913

199828

185876

191742

186114

195503 *

186809

197574

193623

197004

170357 *

193789

172411

193748 *

189035

196709

171504

191189

196719

188136

181909

193821

198200

191817

188060

188133

196725

194662 *

* Selections marked with a star are not available on reel tapes.

Just look at this great selection of recorded entertainment — available in your choice of 8-Track Cartridges OR Tape Cassettes OR Reel-to-Reel Tapes OR 12" LP Records! So no matter which type of stereo playback equipment you now have — you can take advantage of this introductory offer.

To receive your 8 tapes or records for $3.98, mail the coupon provided, together with your check or money order for $3.98 as payment in full. Indicate which type of recorded music you prefer . . . cartridges, cassettes, reel tapes or records . . . and your eight selections will be sent promptly. Also be sure to indicate the field of music in which you are mainly interested.

As a member you will receive, every four weeks, an informative music magazine — describing the regular selection for the month, and scores upon scores of alternate selections from every field of music.

If you do *not* want any selection in any month — merely return the special card by the date specified. If you want *only* the regular selection, do nothing — it will be shipped to you automatically. Or use the card to order any of the alternate selections offered. And from time to time, we will offer some special selections, which you may reject by returning the special dated form provided — or accept by doing nothing.

Your own charge account will be opened upon enrollment . . . you pay for your selections only *after* you have received them. They will be mailed and billed to you at our regular prices: cartridges and cassettes, $6.98; reel-to-reel tapes, $7.98; records, $4.98 . . . plus a mailing and handling charge. (Occasional special selections may be somewhat higher.)

Fantastic bonus plan. Your only obligation is to buy seven selections during the coming year. After doing so, you have no further obligation — and you may cancel membership at any time. If you decide to continue, you will be eligible for our generous bonus plan — which can save you at least 33% on all your future purchases! Act now!

Columbia House

MAIL THIS COUPON TODAY

COLUMBIA HOUSE, Terre Haute, Indiana 47808

Please accept my membership. I am interested in this type of recorded entertainment: (check one only)

- ☐ 8-Track Cartridges G17-8/GK
- ☐ Tape Cassettes G17-9/GL
- ☐ Reel-to-Reel Tape G47-4/HG
- ☐ 12" LP Records N41-4/HF

Send me these eight selections, for which I have enclosed my check or money order for $3.98 as payment in full.
(write in numbers of the eight selections you want)

I agree to buy seven selections during the coming year, and may cancel membership any time thereafter. If I continue, I will be eligible for your bonus plan. All selections will be described in advance in the Club magazine, sent every four weeks. If I do not want any selection, I'll return the selection card by the date specified — or use the card to order any other selection. If I want only the regular selection, I need do nothing — it will be sent automatically. From time to time, I'll be offered special selections which I may accept or reject by using the dated form.

MY MAIN MUSICAL INTEREST IS (check one box only)

☐ Easy Listening ☐ Young Sounds ☐ Country

☐ Mr.
☐ Mrs.
☐ Miss

(Please Print) First Name Initial Last Name

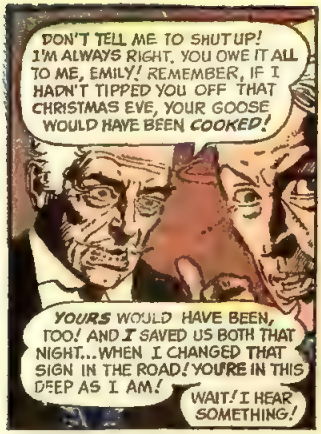
Address

City

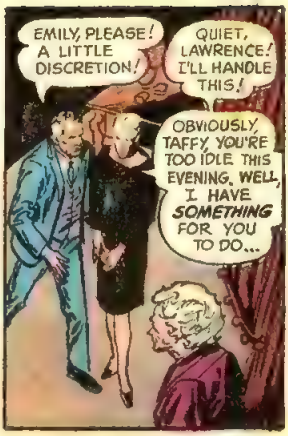
State Zip Code

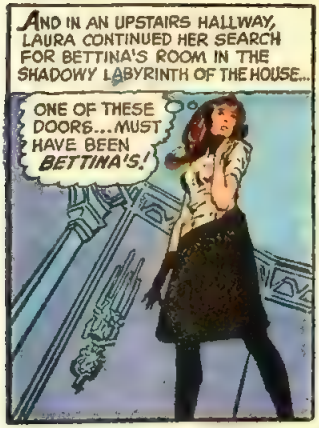
Do You Have A Telephone? (check one) ☐ YES ☐ NO

APO, FPO address: write for special offer


DON'T TELL ME TO SHUT UP! I'M ALWAYS RIGHT. YOU OWE IT ALL TO ME, EMILY! REMEMBER, IF I HADN'T TIPPED YOU OFF THAT CHRISTMAS EVE, YOUR GOOSE WOULD HAVE BEEN COOKED!
YOURS WOULD HAVE BEEN, TOO! AND I SAVED US BOTH THAT NIGHT...WHEN I CHANGED THAT SIGN IN THE ROAD! YOU'RE IN THIS DEEP AS I AM!
WAIT! I HEAR SOMETHING!

TAFFY! YOU FILTHY SNEAK! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?
DON'T YOU YELL AT ME! I HEARD EVERY WORD YOU SAID!


EMILY, PLEASE! A LITTLE DISCRETION!
QUIET, LAWRENCE! I'LL HANDLE THIS!
OBVIOUSLY, TAFFY, YOU'RE TOO IDLE THIS EVENING. WELL, I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU TO DO...


AND IN AN UPSTAIRS HALLWAY, LAURA CONTINUED HER SEARCH FOR BETTINA'S ROOM IN THE SHADOWY LABYRINTH OF THE HOUSE...
ONE OF THESE DOORS...MUST HAVE BEEN BETTINA'S!

BUT SOMEONE WAS LURKING NEARBY, AND LAURA TURNED TO LOOK...
WH-WHO'S THERE?

OHHHH...

WHAT IS IT?
OH, MY GOD. LAURA!
OH, DEAR. NOT ANOTHER NASTY ACCIDENT?

SHE HAD NO BUSINESS UP HERE, ANYWAY!
TAFFY, TAKE HER TO HER ROOM!

NO, EMILY! I'LL HANDLE THIS! STAY BACK, TAFFY!
MICHAEL, ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
GIVE ME THE KEY, EMILY! I'M TAKING HER INTO FATHER'S STUDY.
NO, MICHAEL! NO ONE'S ALLOWED IN THERE. NOT EVEN YOU!
GIVE... ME... THE... KEY, EMILY!
NEVER! I WON'T ALLOW YOU TO DESECRATE YOUR FATHER'S MEMORY!
THEY'RE COMING!
THE KEY, EMILY!
I MUSTN'T MAKE A SOUND!
YOU LEAVE ME NO CHOICE, EMILY!
CRASH
POOR GIRL...SO HELPLESS...SOFT...
OHHH...
MY DARLING!
MICHAEL? OH THANK HEAVENS! WH-WHAT HAPPENED?
SHHH. REST, LAURA. I'LL GET YOU SOME TEA--AND THEN WE'LL TALK!

THIS MUST HAVE BEEN MICHAEL'S FATHER'S ROOM! OBVIOUSLY IT HAS NOT BEEN USED IN A LONG TIME... HMM, THE KIND OF PLACE BETTINA MIGHT HAVE CHOSEN FOR...
THIS DESK... IT HAS SUCH STRANGE AND INTRICATE WOODWORK...
THESE PAPERS ARE THICK WITH DUST! AND THERE'S NOTHING OF BETTINA'S HERE... NOT A THING!
SUDDENLY A SHRILL SCREAM ECHOED THROUGH THE HOUSE...
EEEEE!
OH, MY GOD! WHO'S SCREAMING?
LAURA'S HAND SLAPPED THE DESK IN FEAR, AND MADE CONTACT WITH AN IVORY INSET--- EXPOSING A SECRET DRAWER!
CLICK

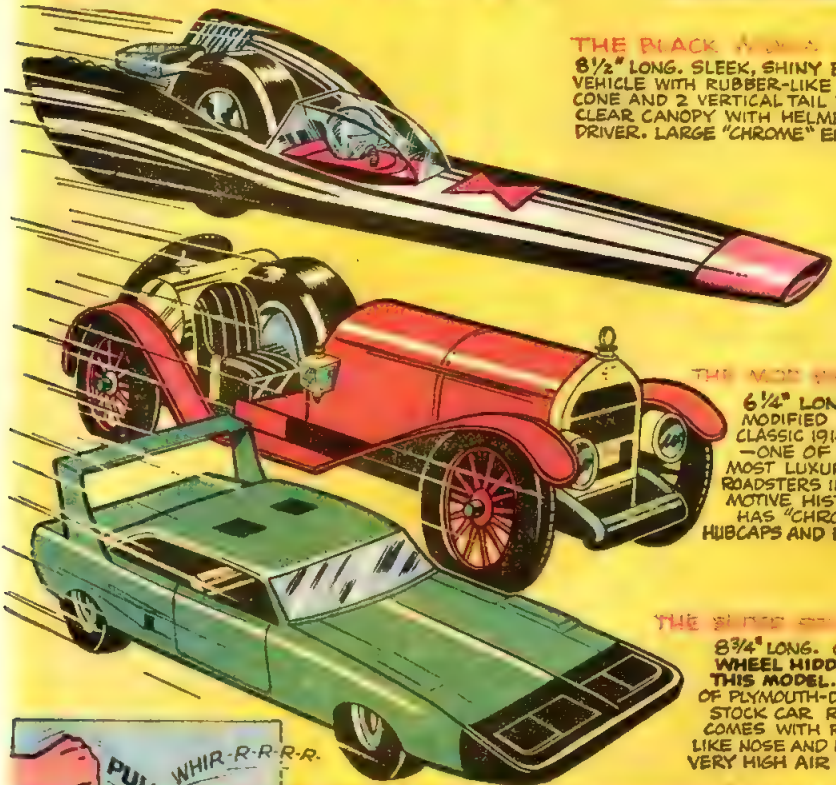
LAURA! DON'T BE SCARED! IT'S MICHAEL!
I'M COMING IN!
BETTINA'S DIARY! I'VE FOUND IT AT LAST!
YES, MICHAEL!
I'M ALL RIGHT, MICHAEL! DON'T WORRY!
I'M STILL NOT SURE THAT I CAN TRUST EVEN HIM!
COME QUICK! FRANCESCA'S OUT ON THE MOORS, CHASING HER CAT! WE'VE GOT TO STOP HER!
WHY MUST I GO?
BECAUSE I WON'T LEAVE YOU ALONE IN THIS HOUSE! COME ON!
AND OUTSIDE...
THIS IS THE LAST TIME YOU'LL ESCAPE ME, MY PRETTY! NEXT TIME... I'LL HAVE YOU!
WHILE OUT ON THE MOORS...
JEZEBEL.....!
FRANCESCA! WAIT! COME BACK! COME BACK!
25

WE'VE GOT TO STOP HER! SHE MAY STUMBLE INTO THE QUICKSAND!
IT LOOKS MORE LIKE SHE'S HEADED FOR THE CLIFF! I'LL TRY TO CUT HER OFF!
UNNOTICED BY THE REST, EMILY HAD MOTIONED TAFFY TO A CLUMP OF TREES NEARBY...
WHY ARE YOU CALLING ME? AREN'T WE SUPPOSED TO FIND MISS FRANCESCA?
THEY'LL TAKE CARE OF HER! YOU AND I HAVE BUSINESS TO DISCUSS!
BUSINESS? WHAT BUSINESS?
...THIS!
MY GOD, NO! THE QUICKSAND! HELP ME, MISS EMILY!
HELP YOU, MY DEAR? YOU KNOW TOO MUCH!
HELP! HELP! OH, MY GOD, HELLLLPP!
I'M AFRAID THEY CAN'T HEAR YOU MY DEAR. IT'S SO SAD... YOU WERE SO RELIABLE FOR SO MANY YEARS!
CONTINUED ON THE PAGE FOLLOWING

LATEST SSP NEWS FLASH!

GET KENNER'S NEWEST RACERS NOW!

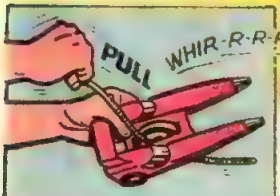
SSP
SUPER SONIC POWER
TM



THE BLACK [illegible]
8½" LONG. SLEEK, SHINY BLACK VEHICLE WITH RUBBER-LIKE NOSE CONE AND 2 VERTICAL TAIL FINS. CLEAR CANOPY WITH HELMETED DRIVER. LARGE "CHROME" ENGINE.

THE [illegible]
6¼" LONG. MODIFIED FROM CLASSIC 1914 AUTO —ONE OF THE MOST LUXURIOUS ROADSTERS IN AUTOMOTIVE HISTORY. HAS "CHROME" HUBCAPS AND EXHAUST.

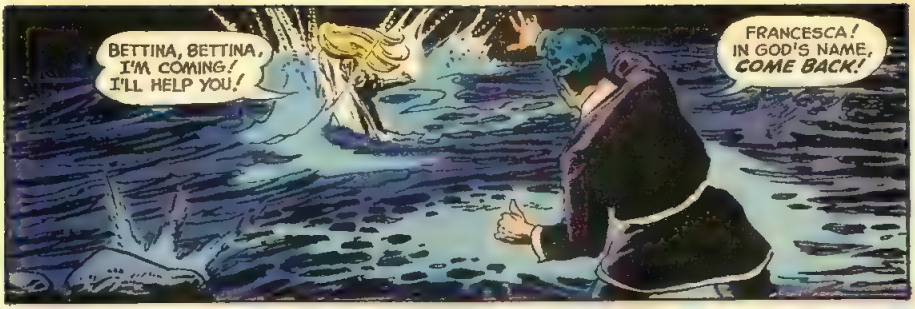
THE [illegible]
8¾" LONG. GYRO-**WHEEL HIDDEN IN THIS MODEL.** REPLICA OF PLYMOUTH-DAYTONA STOCK CAR RACER. COMES WITH RUBBER-LIKE NOSE AND HAS A VERY HIGH AIR FOIL.



READY TO RACE ...
NO BATTERIES! NO TRACK!
GYRO-POWERED!

COLLECT & RACE ALL THE EXCITING SSP [illegible]!

HELP! IT'S TAFFY IN THE QUICKSAND PIT! SAVE HER!
HELP!
AS IF THEY COULD!
OH, IT'S HORRIBLE.
WHAT A DREADFUL ACCIDENT! FATE PLAYS STRANGE TRICKS...
SHE SLIPPED. I TRIED TO SAVE HER! :SOB:
SO IT'S GOT HER AT LAST. SHE WAS ALWAYS AFRAID OF THE QUICKSAND!
AND AT LANGFREY LEAP...
WHERE HAS MY KITTY GONE? OH, JEZEBEL, ARE YOU LOOKING FOR BETTINA?
BETTINA! BETTINA! I WON'T LET THEM DROWN YOU THIS TIME!
LET THEM...? WHAT DOES SHE MEAN, MICHAEL?
NOT NOW, LAURA! I'VE GOT TO SAVE FRANCESCA!

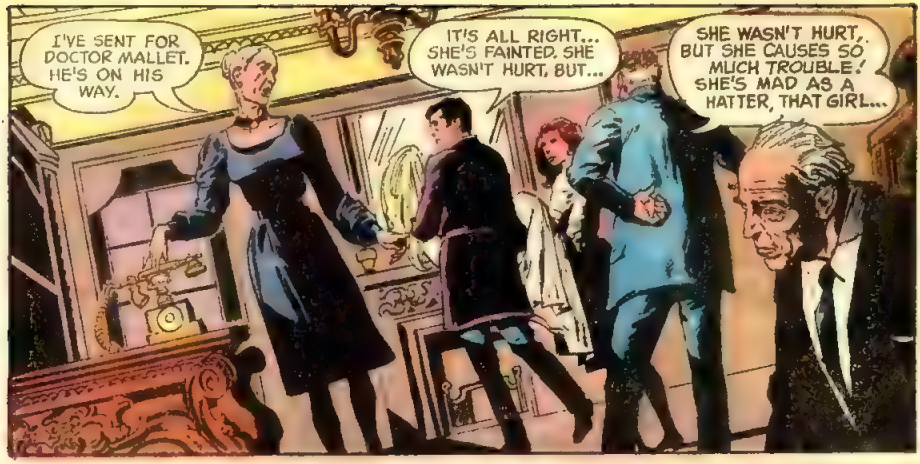

BETTINA, BETTINA, I'M COMING! I'LL HELP YOU!
FRANCESCA! IN GOD'S NAME, COME BACK!

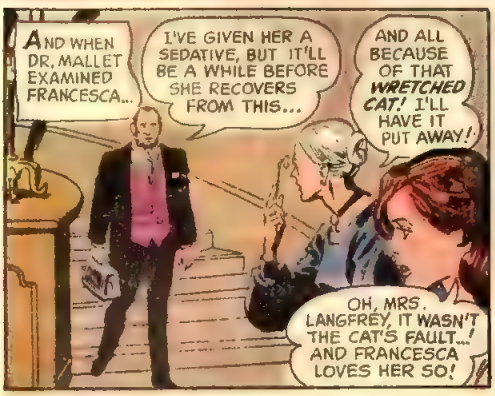
DON'T, MICHAEL! I'VE GOT TO SAVE BETTINA!
DON'T WORRY FRANCESCA! COME WITH ME!

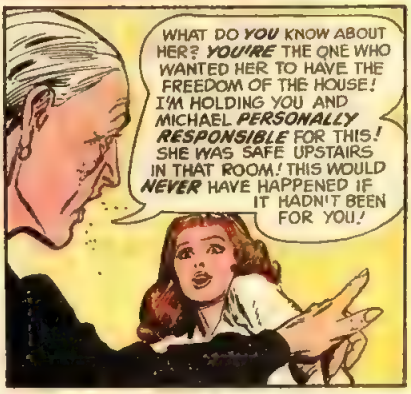
OH, GOD! SO THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO BETTINA! HOW HORRIBLE!
IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW, FRANCESCA. NO ONE'S GOING TO HURT YOU!
POOR FRANCESCA! WHAT HORRORS SHE MUST HAVE SEEN!

I'LL CALL DR. MALLET. YOU BRING HER INSIDE!
THERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS I WANT TO ASK YOU, EMILY!
WHENEVER YOU WISH, MY DEAR.

AT THAT VERY MOMENT, A FIGURE WAITED INSIDE THE DARK HOUSE...
PATIENCE, PATIENCE! SOON, THEY'LL SLEEP! AND THEN...

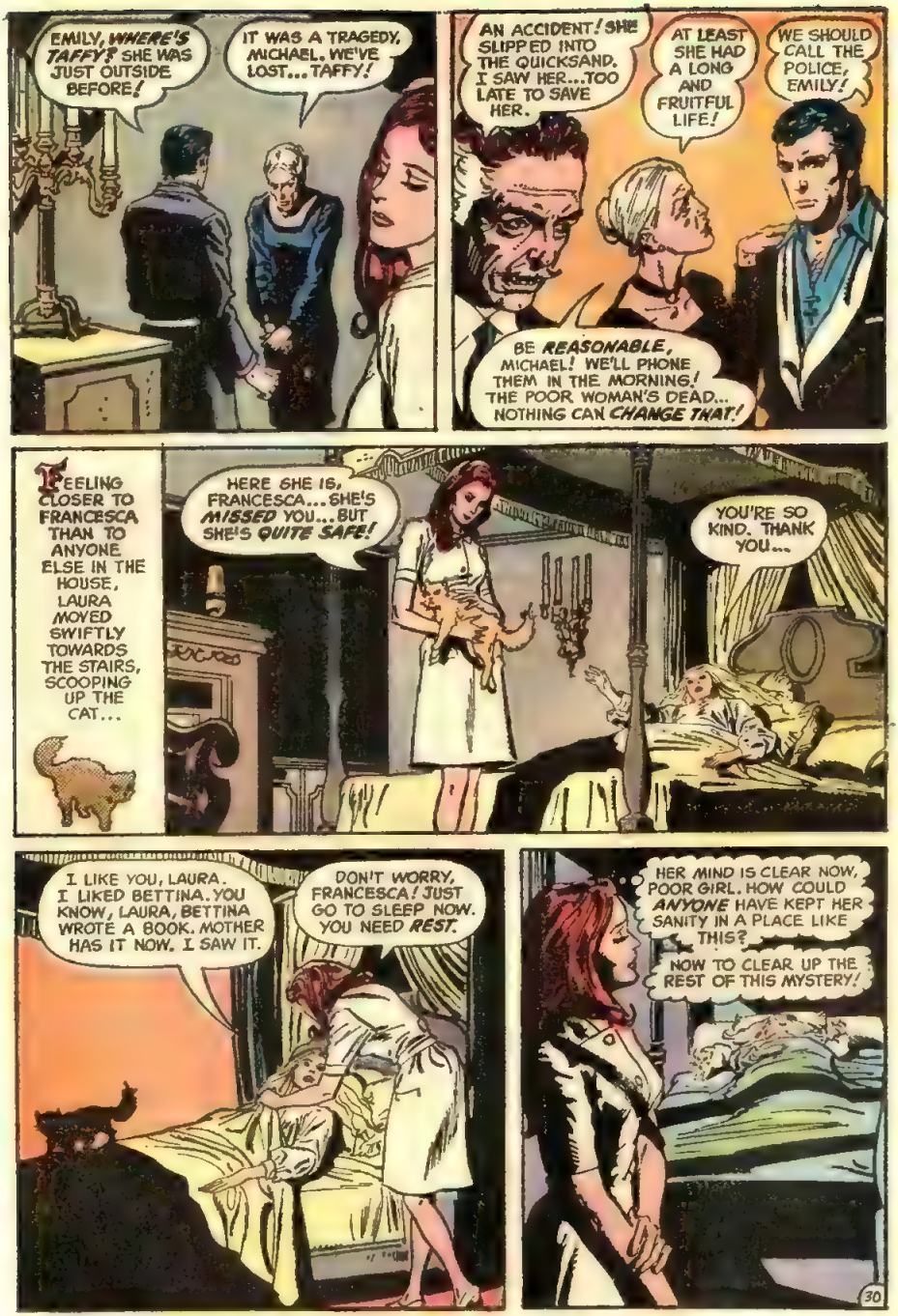

I'VE SENT FOR DOCTOR MALLET. HE'S ON HIS WAY.
IT'S ALL RIGHT... SHE'S FAINTED. SHE WASN'T HURT, BUT...
SHE WASN'T HURT, BUT SHE CAUSES SO MUCH TROUBLE! SHE'S MAD AS A HATTER, THAT GIRL...

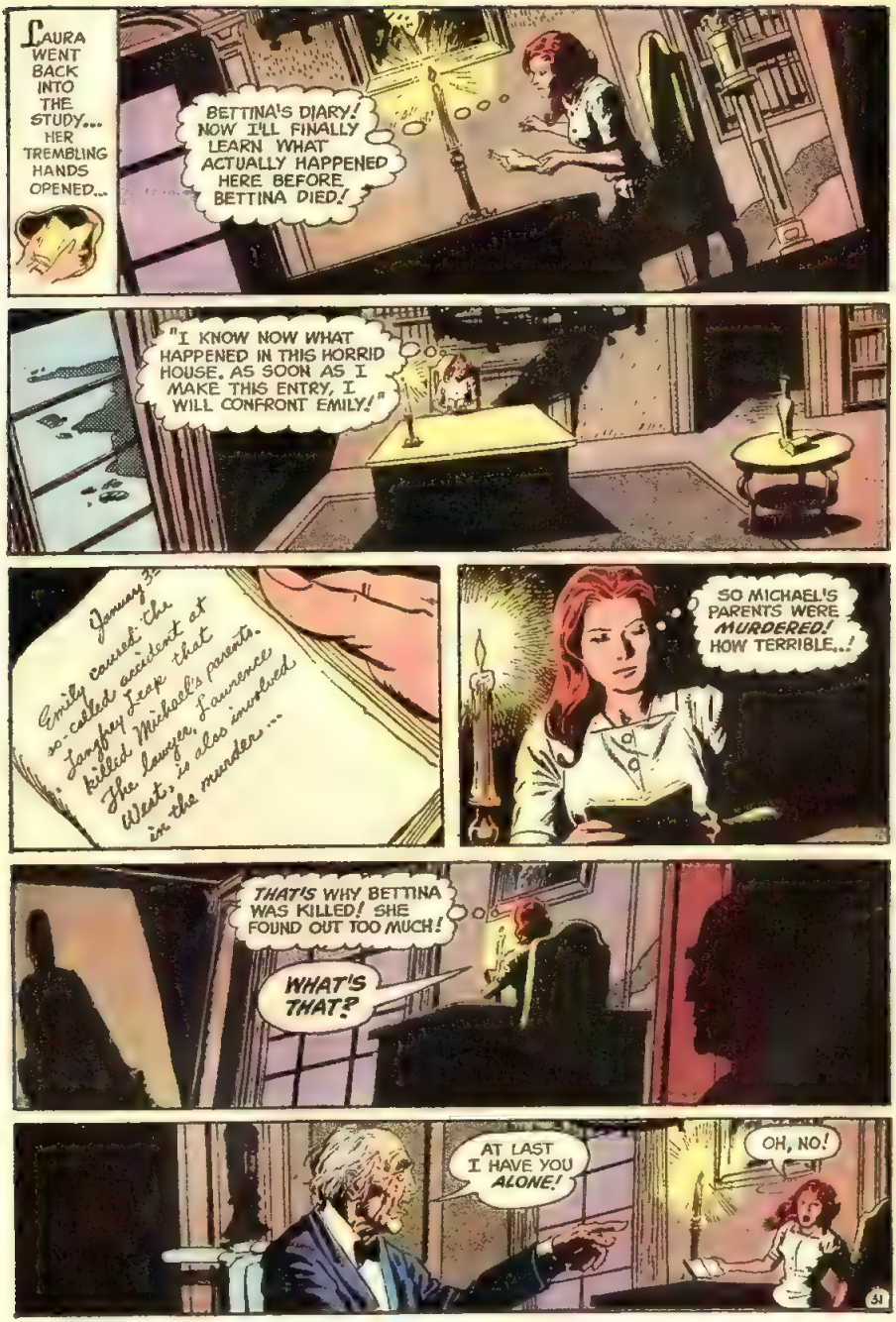

AND WHEN DR. MALLET EXAMINED FRANCESCA...
I'VE GIVEN HER A SEDATIVE, BUT IT'LL BE A WHILE BEFORE SHE RECOVERS FROM THIS...
AND ALL BECAUSE OF THAT WRETCHED CAT! I'LL HAVE IT PUT AWAY!
OH, MRS. LANGFREY, IT WASN'T THE CAT'S FAULT...! AND FRANCESCA LOVES HER SO!


WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT HER? YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WANTED HER TO HAVE THE FREEDOM OF THE HOUSE! I'M HOLDING YOU AND MICHAEL PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS! SHE WAS SAFE UPSTAIRS IN THAT ROOM! THIS WOULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR YOU!

OH, LAURA, DON'T TAKE IT SO HARD! EMILY'S JUST UPSET...
I NEVER SHOULD HAVE INTERFERED! SHE KNOWS HER OWN DAUGHTER BETTER THAN ANYONE... AND SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN SAFER LOCKED UP!
OH, IF ONLY I COULD TELL HIM MY SUSPICIONS...

PLEASE, LAURA! YOU MUSTN'T BLAME YOURSELF ... FRANCESCA HAS BEEN SUBJECT TO CRISES LIKE THIS EVER SINCE MY PARENTS DIED. MEMORIES OF DEATH DISTURB HER.
I MUST READ THAT DIARY! I'VE GOT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO BETTINA!


EMILY, WHERE'S TAFFY? SHE WAS JUST OUTSIDE BEFORE!
IT WAS A TRAGEDY, MICHAEL. WE'VE LOST... TAFFY!
AN ACCIDENT! SHE SLIPPED INTO THE QUICKSAND. I SAW HER...TOO LATE TO SAVE HER.
AT LEAST SHE HAD A LONG AND FRUITFUL LIFE!
WE SHOULD CALL THE POLICE, EMILY!
BE REASONABLE, MICHAEL! WE'LL PHONE THEM IN THE MORNING! THE POOR WOMAN'S DEAD... NOTHING CAN CHANGE THAT!
FEELING CLOSER TO FRANCESCA THAN TO ANYONE ELSE IN THE HOUSE, LAURA MOVED SWIFTLY TOWARDS THE STAIRS, SCOOPING UP THE CAT...
HERE SHE IS, FRANCESCA... SHE'S MISSED YOU... BUT SHE'S QUITE SAFE!
YOU'RE SO KIND. THANK YOU...
I LIKE YOU, LAURA. I LIKED BETTINA. YOU KNOW, LAURA, BETTINA WROTE A BOOK. MOTHER HAS IT NOW. I SAW IT.
DON'T WORRY, FRANCESCA! JUST GO TO SLEEP NOW. YOU NEED REST.
HER MIND IS CLEAR NOW, POOR GIRL. HOW COULD ANYONE HAVE KEPT HER SANITY IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?
NOW TO CLEAR UP THE REST OF THIS MYSTERY!


LAURA WENT BACK INTO THE STUDY... HER TREMBLING HANDS OPENED...
BETTINA'S DIARY! NOW I'LL FINALLY LEARN WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED HERE BEFORE BETTINA DIED!
"I KNOW NOW WHAT HAPPENED IN THIS HORRID HOUSE. AS SOON AS I MAKE THIS ENTRY, I WILL CONFRONT EMILY!"
January 3rd
Emily caused the so-called accident at Langley Leap that killed Michael's parents. The lawyer, Lawrence West, is also involved in the murder...
SO MICHAEL'S PARENTS WERE MURDERED! HOW TERRIBLE..!
THAT'S WHY BETTINA WAS KILLED! SHE FOUND OUT TOO MUCH!
WHAT'S THAT?
AT LAST I HAVE YOU ALONE!
OH, NO!
51

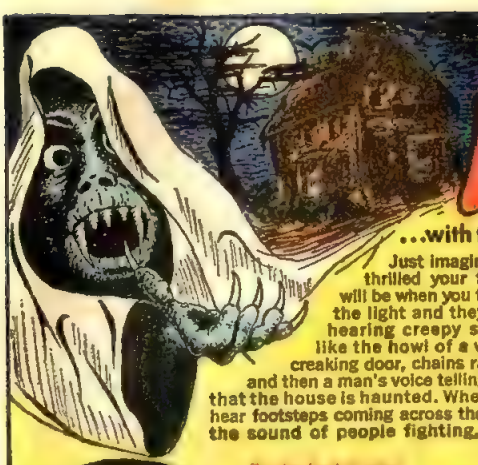
OH! SEBASTIAN, YOU STARTLED ME...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? THIS ROOM IS FORBIDDEN TO YOU! AND WHAT'S THAT YOU'RE HIDING?
NOTHING! JUST A BOOK OF MINE...
LET...ME... SEE...IT!
YOU CAN'T HAVE IT! IT'S MY BOOK!
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU! I SHALL PUNISH YOU FOR THIS...DECEIT!
MY DECEIT? COMPARED TO WHAT'S GOING ON IN THIS HOUSE, IT'S NOTHING! I'VE GOT EVIDENCE OF MURDER—AND I'M TAKING IT TO THE POLICE!
YOU ARE NOT GOING ANYWHERE MY DEAR!
I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU! WHAT CAN YOU DO TO ME?
WHAT CAN I DO?
YOU SEE, MY DEAR... I'M ONLY CRIPPLED WHEN IT SUITS ME!
NO! NO!!
HUSH, MY CHILD! NO USE TO CRY...

WHAT IS..? YOU!!
HE'S INSANE! GET SOMEONE! HELP!

AT LAST... I HAVE MY REVENGE! TEN YEARS! I'VE WAITED!
WH-WHO ARE YOU?
I AM JOHN LANGFREY! SEBASTIAN IS - WAS - HA-HA-HA! - MY BROTHER!
THEY LOCKED ME AWAY IN THE MADHOUSE AND STOLE MY INHERITANCE! GAH! TEN YEARS I'VE LIVED WITH MADMEN, BUT I'M NOT MAD! HEE-HEE!
I'M NOT, AM I, ALICE? YOU ALWAYS LIKED ME...
ALICE? HE THINKS I'M MICHAEL'S MOTHER!
OF COURSE, I LIKE YOU, ER... JOHN. NOW WILL YOU WAIT HERE A MOMENT FOR ME? THERE'S SOMETHING I MUST DO!
YES, ALICE... I'LL WAIT FOR YOU.
LAURA! LAURA DEAR! DON'T COME NEAR HERE! SOMETHING DREADFUL HAS HAPPENED!
I KNOW, MICHAEL! POOR SEBASTIAN. THE MADMAN KILLED HIM! I WAS THERE!
THE MADMAN? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
REMEMBER THE RADIO ALERT ABOUT THE ESCAPED LUNATIC? HE'S UPSTAIRS! HE SAYS HE'S JOHN LANGFREY!

JOHN LANGFREY! HERE? NONSENSE! SHE MUST HAVE PUSHED SEBASTIAN HERSELF!
BE QUIET, EMILY! I WON'T HAVE YOU SPEAK OF HER THAT WAY. GO AHEAD, WHAT DID YOU SAY, LAURA?
MICHAEL, YOU MUST LISTEN TO ME! THAT MADMAN'S UPSTAIRS...
AS THE TERRIFIED GIRL POURED OUT HER STORY, UPSTAIRS, JOHN LANGFREY WAS IN THE STUDY, GIVING FULL VENT TO AN OUTRAGED, DISORDERED MIND...
I'LL FINISH THEM ALL OFF... AND THIS CURSED HOUSE!
AND DOWNSTAIRS...
IT'S ALL IN BETTINA'S DIARY, MICHAEL! EMILY STOLE A FORTUNE FROM YOUR PARENTS! WHEN THEY FOUND OUT, SHE KILLED THEM! AND I'M SURE BETTINA'S DEATH WAS NO ACCIDENT!
SO THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED! IT ALL FALLS INTO PLACE RIGHT NOW! STAY HERE, LAURA— I'M CALLING THE POLICE!
YOU CAN'T MEAN IT, MICHAEL! SHE'S A LIAR... SHE'S MAKING IT ALL UP!
IT'S NO USE, EMILY... I'M CALLING THE POLICE!
35

CONTINUED ON 35¢ PAGE FOLLOWING



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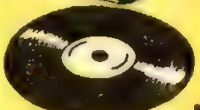

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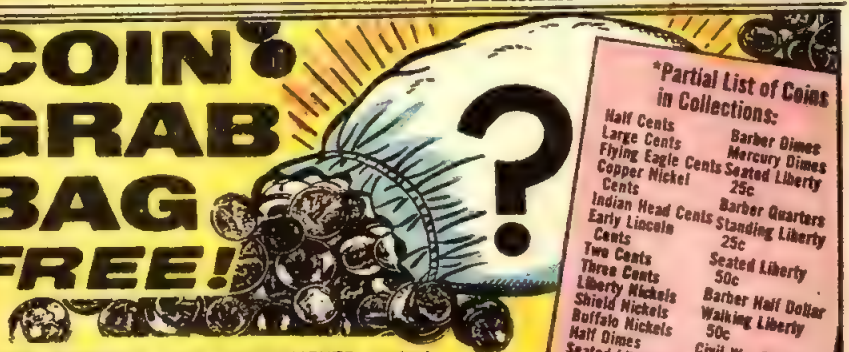

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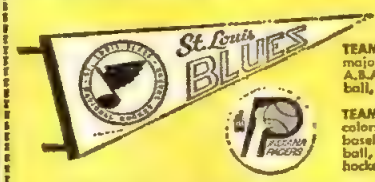

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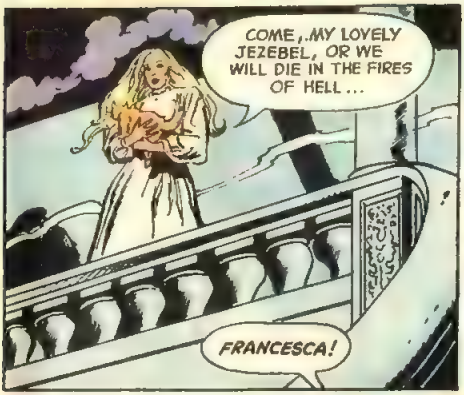
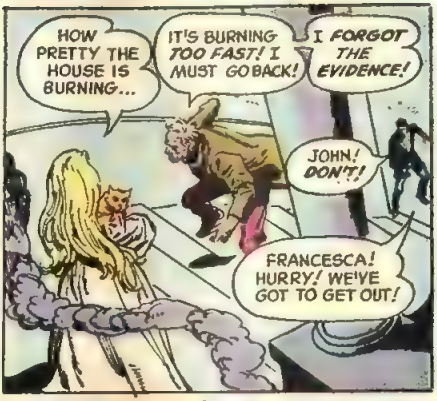
HELLO, MY DEAR FAMILY!
IT'S JOHN!
THEN YOU DID KILL SEBASTIAN!
OH MY GOD! HE'S BACK!


COME, MY LOVELY JEZEBEL, OR WE WILL DIE IN THE FIRES OF HELL...
FRANCESCA!


HOW PRETTY THE HOUSE IS BURNING...
IT'S BURNING TOO FAST! I MUST GO BACK!
I FORGOT THE EVIDENCE!
JOHN! DON'T!
FRANCESCA! HURRY! WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT!

OUTSIDE, AS THE POLICE ARRIVED...
IT'S SO AWFUL, MICHAEL! IT- IT HAPPENED SO FAST!
DON'T TALK ABOUT IT, LAURA! COME INTO MY ARMS, DARLING...

MICHAEL, MICHAEL!

WHILE INSIDE...
AT LAST! I HAVE MY REVENGE! THIS IS THE END OF THE CURSED LANGFREY HOUSE!

MICHAEL—LOOK! CAN'T WE SAVE HIM?
IT'S TOO LATE, LAURA! THE HOUSE IS ABOUT TO GO! DON'T LOOK, MY DARLING!
WITHIN SECONDS, THE ROARING WIND SEIZED LANGFREY HOUSE AND IT EXPLODED IN FLAME...
THANK GOD--THE SECRETS OF THE PAST ARE OUT IN THE OPEN!
COME ALONG NOW! THE INSPECTOR IS WAITING FOR YOU!
YES, MICHAEL! WE'RE FREE AT LAST, FREE OF ALL THE MISERY...
YES, LAURA, NOW WE CAN FACE THE FUTURE... OUR FUTURE! YOU WILL MARRY ME, WON'T YOU?
OH, MICHAEL! YES!
AS LANGFREY HOUSE SMOLDERED IN THE BREEZE AND THE EVILDOERS WERE LED AWAY BY POLICE, THE TWO LOVERS CAME INTO EACH OTHER'S ARMS— AND LAURA CHANDLER WAS HOME SAFE AT LAST.
THE END

THE LOVE THAT WAS STRONGER THAN DEATH D-371

About two hundred years ago in the city of Toulouse in France lived a rich, beautiful girl named Victorine d'Olmond. When she was fifteen, she fell passionately in love with a dashing young army officer named de Sezanne. He could not resist, and she won his heart. Soon they became engaged.

But before the wedding could take place, de Sezanne's regiment was called away. Sadly, the young lovers said their goodbyes.

"I promise upon my soul that I will return to marry you, my beloved," pledged de Sezanne.

"I will wait for you," promised Victorine.

Two years passed, and Victorine did not hear from her handsome fiance. She was unhappy, but she trusted him and she was sure that there was a good reason for his silence. At last she learned the terrible news: her father received a report that de Sezanne's entire regiment had been wiped out!

* * *

Victorine wanted to die. Without de Sezanne, her life was empty. She shut herself away in her parents' house and grieved.

A year passed.

"Victorine, you are young and lovely and rich," her father said at last. "It's foolish of you to waste your life like this. I have found a wealthy old gentleman who wants you to marry him."

At first Victorine refused. But, resigned to a life without de Sezanne, she finally gave in.

She did not love her husband much, but soon she had a daughter whom she cherished dearly.

Three years passed. Suddenly Victorine fell ill and died. Her husband was an important man, and he gave her a lavish funeral. M. d'Saint Alban spared no expense. He had a great shrine erected in honor of his lovely Victorine. People came from miles around to pay their last respects.

"So tragic!" they whispered. "So young . . . cut down like a beautiful rose!"

One day, five years later, M. d'Saint Alban was visiting his wife's tomb when he saw another visitor.

She looked so much like Victorine that he was frightened. She gave him a strange look and fled.

M. d'Saint Alban was disturbed by this mysterious visitor whose beautiful, familiar face brought back memories of Victorine. He followed her to a nearby inn and learned from the innkeeper that her name was Madame de Sezanne and that she had just arrived in Toulouse with her husband.

M. d'Saint Alban became very suspicious. He had his wife's shrine opened and found that the coffin was empty.

* * *

M. d'Saint Alban asked the authorities to begin an investigation right away. It was soon learned that a young soldier named de Sezanne had been seen five years ago, exactly one day after Victorine's funeral, leaving the city with a heavily-veiled lady.

The case was brought to court. De Sezanne produced evidence that his wife was the daughter of an Italian peasant. When Victorine's mother and father were brought into the courtroom, Victorine denied ever having known them.

M. d'Saint Alban stood his ground. "That woman is my wife!" he said. "I am going to bring in evidence to prove it!" He hurried out of the courtroom.

De Sezanne became very nervous. Trembling, he approached the bench.

"Most of my regiment was killed in battle, your Honor, but I was taken prisoner. For years I sat in my cell thinking only of Victorine and the promise I made to her. Just before I was released, I sent a letter to Victorine. Although I knew she was married, I prayed that there would still be some hope for us. She wrote back a note telling me not to worry, she'd arrange for us to be together. I thought it odd when she ended it with 'Till death do us part.' It was not until I returned to Toulouse that I realized what she meant."

At this moment, M. d'Saint Alban returned with a pretty little girl. "This is my daughter," he announced. "This is the child of Victorine!"

"Yes," Victorine cried, "she is mine. I am Victorine. I planned it all so we could be together. I pretended to die . . . I knew de Sezanne would question my death and come to see for himself. It was the only way I could be sure that we'd never be apart again. He came to the tomb and freed me . . . together we fled."

The judge shook his head. "This is the most remarkable story ever heard in a courtroom," he said. "Clearly Victorine belongs to her first husband. That is my decision."

* * *

Victorine wept bitterly. "If I cannot live my new life with my beloved Sezanne, I will take my daughter and we will both go where you will never find us."

Victorine raised her daughter to young womanhood, then retired to a convent, still mourning her lost love

THROUGH THE KEYHOLE OF DARK MANSION D-385

DEAR READER:

We hope you enjoyed this first issue of DARK MANSION OF FORBIDDEN LOVE, and we'd like to know your reaction to it. Would you like to see more stories like SECRET OF THE MISSING BRIDE? Would you like one long and one shorter story—or a complete novelette like "Missing Bride?" Is there any special kind of story you'd like to see?

Do write in. It's YOU we aim to please. . .

And when you write, drop a word about yourself . . . your age, sex, whether you go to school or work. We'll print the most interesting letters we get.

Meanwhile, don't miss the next issue of DARK MANSION OF FORBIDDEN LOVE—there's a wing-dinger of a tale you won't be able to put down!

All the Best,
Your Editor

Send Letters to:

DARK MANSION OF FORBIDDEN LOVE
National Periodical Publications
909 Third Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10022

Dear Miss Woolfolk:

As a mother of three enthusiastic (sometimes too much so) young readers of comics and a mystery fan myself, I have to congratulate you on your fine new book, "The Dark Mansion of Forbidden Love."

Tony de Zuniga is a great artist, and the writer deserves a lot of credit, too. That Michael Langfrey—what a heart throb!

Seriously, though, congratulations again on an excellent magazine!

Barbara Kramer,
Atlanta, Ga.

Dear Editor:

Being a man I normally wouldn't buy a magazine entitled "The Dark Mansion of Forbidden Love." However, having received an advance copy of your new magazine containing the story, "The Secret of the Missing Bride," I have changed my opinion of this kind of magazine.

The story had real depth to it. It wasn't the typical girl-meets-boy, girl-loses-boy, girl-finds-boy plot. It really kept you on the edge of your seat.

If you continue along this line, don't be surprised if you collect a substantial male audience.

Paul Miller,
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Editor:

I can't tell you how much I enjoyed reading "The Mystery of the Missing Bride." The idea of mixing mystery and love has always intrigued me, and what a great job you did combining the two. I am usually able to figure out the endings to stories, but in this case I was stumped. I couldn't put the magazine down until I found out who did what to whom and why.

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to read the advance edition of Dark Mansion of Forbidden Love. Keep me on your mailing list and please keep up the good work.

Edyth Scott,
Evanston, Ill.

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No. FL7 ..... $1.00

20 Course Home Study Program KARATE

only $1.00

JUDO, BOXING, SAVATE, ISOMETRICS, STUNTS

FREE NERVE CENTER CHART

Here's what you get!

- 20 Best KARATE blows and chops
- SAVATE French foot fighting
- Nerve center anatomy chart
- JUDO throws, JIU JITSO Holds
- Isometric muscle building course
- Endurance exercise and LOTS MORE

NO. 73 ..... $1.00

SPOOK HAND

A million laughs! This realistic, skin colored spook hand has red fingernails and big knuckles that are completely realistic. Imagine it poking out of your car, out of a pot, opening a door. Sticks anywhere with special adhesive included. Can be re-used over & over again, it's a real weird.

8079 ..... 98c

MUSCLES OF STEEL

Results in just 30 days

Pocket gym stops inches at muscle on your arms and torso. Gain the respect of your friends — the admiration of the girls. Keep fit and healthy. Fear no one! Made of heavy rubber.

No. 7001 ..... only $1.00

MONEY CHANGER

Just like a professional money changer. Attaches to any belt, holds pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters.

No. 76 ..... 50c

EXHAUST WHISTLE

Just slip it into the tailpipe of your friend's car ... then watch him when he starts the engine! The looks and noises will make him think the motor's about to blow up or fall apart! Double you rear with laughter.

No. F185 ..... 50c

Secret Spy Scope

Six power wide field magnifier is great for watching sporting events, nature study, girl-watching and counter spying. Also contains a 30 power microscope. Not a toy but a real optical instrument.

No. 758 ..... $1.50

ONION GUM

Looks like real chewing gum but tastes like ONIONS! It's too funny! 5 slices to a pack.

No. 281 ..... 20c

Lots of FUN passing out this Spearmint Gum with Hot Pepper added. Regulation pack, 5 sticks in cello wrapped package to keep it fresh.

A121 ..... 25c

FANGS

These plastic teeth (?) fit over your own teeth and, needless to say, they'll completely change your appearance — for the worse. We think they're too much, but why not let your friends be the judges?

Item No. 836 ..... 25c

HOW TO PERFORM STRONG MAN STUNTS

AMAZE YOUR FRIENDS

Learn eleven strong man stunts which you can easily perform to astonish your audience. Book includes No Man muscle building course — A real buy

Item #400 ..... 50c

PHONY CAST

Imitation white plaster arm cast complete with arm sling. Looks like the real thing! Fits teenagers or adults.

A4 ..... $1.98

JOY BUZZER

Windup novelty you wear like a ring. Your victim gets a "SHOCKING" hand shake Absolutely harmless.

No. 275 ..... Only 50c

SILENT DOG WHISTLE

This whistle don't be heard by human ears, but how can, how it isn't a mile away. Your dog will understand that this whistle is for him alone. So annoyed him quickly he responds.

No. 701 ..... $2.00

MONEYMAKER

Insert a blank piece of paper into the blank ... and ... OUT COMES A REAL DOLLAR BILL! Insert the real bill and it changes to a $5 then the $5 changes to $10 then ...

No. 678 ..... 50c

SURPRISE PACKAGE

Are you willing to take a chance? We won't tell you what you get, but because you're willing to take a chance, we'll give you more than your money's worth.

No. 676 ..... Only 50c

TRICK BASEBALL

It bounces enclosed. It curves. It does, it does not. It's possible to catch. It's sure to get all the kids on the block spinning after it.

No. 158 ..... 60c

7 FOOT MONSTER

Bigger than life — Frankenstein, the man made monster Giant 7 foot tall, his eyes glow eerily in authentic color on durable polyethelene, as scary as your wildest nightmare

No. 805 ..... $1.00

MONSTER-SIZE SKELETON

No. F290 ..... $1.00

THROW YOUR VOICE

Throw your voice into trunks behind doors, everywhere. Fits in your mouth out of sight. Fool teacher, friends, family. Free book on "How to Become a Ventriloquist"

No. 127 ..... 25c

BULLET HOLES

Item No. FL156 ..... 50c

8 MM MOTION PICTURE PROJECTOR

COLOR OR BLACK & WHITE

HAVE ALL THE FUN OF PRIVATE MOVIES NOW AT THIS LOW PRICE

Precision engineered and compact. Completely portable in its own case. Needs no elaborate outlet since it is battery operated. Simple and safe to use. Its double lens focusing is sure and easy for bright, clear pictures. Only $6.98 plus 75c for postage and handling or send $1.00 good will deposit and pay postman balance on delivery plus COD and postage charges. Add $2.98 for each additional pair of "Miracle Specs."

ITEM# PH97 ..... $6.98

ADDITIONAL SPECS $2.98

SKIN HEAD WIG

Most people try to grow hair. This is just the opposite. Made of flesh toned latex to fit all heads, really changes your appearance.

No. A38 ..... $1.00

MAGIC CARDS

Deck is marked and stripped. Can be read from the back but looks like ordinary deck. With instructions for 10 terrific tricks.

No. 183 ..... $1.98

FOAMING SUGAR

Looks just like real sugar, but that's where the resemblance stops. When it's dropped in liquids, they overflow and form clouds of suds

A367 ..... 35¢

FREE! NEW THRILLING SENSATION

Add 3-D Stereo effect with "Miracle Specs" which makes people look as full and real you can reach out and touch them. One pair comes with each projector. Additional pairs are $2.98 each.

ONLY $6.98

FEATURES:

- Sturdy Construction
- Complete with Screen
- Projects Color or Black and White
- Speed Control for fast or slow motion
- Reverse Action

SECRET BOOK SAFE

With combination lock only you can open.

$1.00

Looks like any book so no one would think to look for valuables in it. Securely locked by combination only you know - because you yourself have set it. Tough under-structure is covered with simulated leather binding.

700 ..... $1

BOOMERANG

Something new in target throwing. In case you miss, it returns to you and bingo! you're set to "fire" again. Great fun and skill.

No. 141 ..... $1.00

WORM TRICK

Drop these seemingly innocent pellets into a glass of water and magically a worm will appear. Can you imagine the look of horror on your victims face! It's harmless.

No. B17 ..... 10c

JACK POT BANK

Same operating jack Pot Bank works like the one armed bandit in Las Vegas. Deposit the dime and spin the handle. Wheels spin and look like the real stuff. Dimes are removable. Should not be used for gambling purposes.

No. 2000

$1.69

SEE BEHIND GLASSES

A specially treated pair of sunglasses which allows the wearer to see behind you without turning around or watching. Really comes in handy at times.

No. 38 ..... 75¢

LEARN HYPNOTIC CONTROL

Develop your hidden hypnotic powers to control the minds and bodies of men and women. Learn to perform amazing feats and entertain at parties. Easily learned from the new book "25 Lessons in Hypnotism."

No. T212 ..... 48c

OVER 1000 FREE GIFTS WORTH FOR THE ASKING

This miracle book gives the addresses of associations, federal agencies, and manufacturers that are anxious to send you ABSOLUTELY FREE samples, manuals and books. A fabulous treasure trove compactly up-to-date which will bring you gifts worth many times its low cost.

Item #86 ..... 50c

1000 FREE GIFTS

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35 WILBUR ST., LYNBROOK, N.Y. 11563

Rush me the items listed below. If I am not 100% satisfied, I may return any part of my purchase after 10 days FREE TRIAL for full refund of purchase price.

We cannot accept orders totaling less than $1.00.

NAME & NUMBER OF ITEM	HOW MANY	TOTAL PRICE

Please add 25c to total order for postage and handling.

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED

For COD orders please send 50c good will deposit. Pay postman the balance on delivery plus COD and handling charges.

NAME .....

ADDRESS ..... ZIP .....

New York State residents add appropriate sales tax.

FAMOUS NAME PRIZES OR CASH

THE EASY OLYMPIC WAY!

FREE SAMPLE CARDS — EARN $1.00 A BOX

KODAK INSTAMATIC CAMERA OUTFIT Sell Only 8 Boxes
VISIBLE V-8 ENGINE Sell Only 7 Boxes
ARCHERY SET Sell Only 6 Boxes
DELUXE MONOPOLY Sell Only 6 Boxes
PORTABLE TV SET Sell Only 48 Boxes
MUSTANG PLANE SET Sell Only 8 Boxes
TWO MAN RUBBER BOAT Sell Only 26 Boxes
G.E. PHONOGRAPH Sell Only 12 Boxes
MATTEL HOT WHEELS SET Sell Only 8 Boxes
BOLERO RADIO Sell Only 8 Boxes
SENIOR CHEMISTRY LAB Sell Only 8 Boxes
COX CHOPPER Sell Only 12 Boxes
VOIT SKIN DIVING OUTFIT Sell Only 7 Boxes
GENERAL ELECTRIC POCKET RADIO Sell Only 6 Boxes
GO-GO CALENDAR WATCH Sell Only 6 Boxes
CASSETTE TAPE RECORDER Sell Only 22 Boxes
KNIFE & AXE SET Sell Only 6 Boxes
3-SPEED HI-RISER BIKE Sell Only 30 Boxes
MOUNTAIN TENT Sell Only 12 Boxes
LADDER FIRE TRUCK KIT Sell Only 6 Boxes
PITCH BACK Sell Only 9 Boxes
LIGHT WEIGHT BICYCLE Sell Only 30 Boxes
SPALDING BASEBALL GLOVE Sell Only 6 Boxes
GENERAL ELECTRIC CLOCK RADIO Sell Only 16 Boxes
ALARM WRIST WATCH Sell Only 10 Boxes
FLUORESCENT MINI-LAMP Sell Only 6 Boxes
COX DUNE BUGGY Sell Only 10 Boxes
HONDA MOTORCYCLE KIT Sell Only 10 Boxes
ELECTRIC FOOTBALL GAME Sell Only 7 Boxes
BIKE SPEEDOMETER Sell Only 6 Boxes

AURORA MODEL MOTORING SET Sell Only 14 Boxes
COX CORSAIR PLANE SET Sell Only 8 Boxes
ELECTRIC BUILD IT SET Sell Only 7 Boxes
SENIOR MICROSCOPE LAB Sell Only 8 Boxes
SPALDING BASKETBALL Sell Only 6 Boxes
PORTABLE AM-FM TABLE RADIO Sell Only 12 Boxes
AURORA SKITTLE POOL Sell Only 14 Boxes
POODLE RADIO Sell Only 8 Boxes
WALKIE TALKIE SET Sell Only 12 Boxes
POLAROID COLORPACK IV CAMERA Sell Only 28 Boxes
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BIKE GENERATOR LIGHT SET Sell Only 6 Boxes
SKIN DIVER CALENDAR WATCH Sell Only 7 Boxes
OVERNITER SLUMBER BAG Sell Only 10 Boxes
OVERNIGHT SLEEPING BAG Sell Only 7 Boxes
$350.00 EXTRA CASH PRIZE CONTEST*
THREE WINNERS EVERY MONTH
STREAKER MINI BIKE Sell Only 80 Boxes
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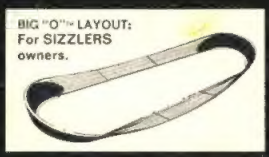

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